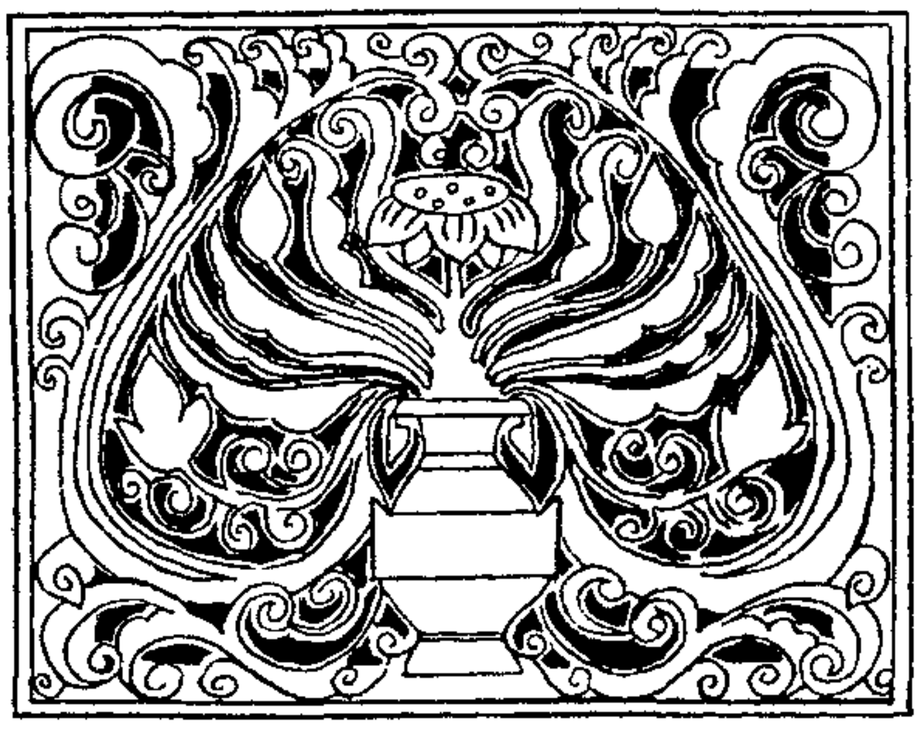

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CONTENTS

Vedic Prayers 553

Let Us Not Stop!
Editorial 554

Images of India's Past 559

Sir William Jones, Father of Oriental Research
Dr. Satish K. Kapoor 560

Stress—Is it Inevitable?
Prof. S. Dandapani 562

Muṇḍaka Upanisad
Swami Sridharananda 566

Religion and Life: Swami Bhuteshanandaji's Answers to Questions

Continued on the next page

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A Compilation 569

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Dr. C. S. Shah 575

Vedanta and Mathematical Logic
Swami Atmapriyananda 579

Non-dual Truth and Spiritual Practice
Bob Kindler 583

Exploring Dynamic Interplay Between Opposites in Human Mind
Dr. Sampooran Singh 585

Why Swami Vivekananda Appeals to Me
Jiro Aiko 591

Reviews and Notices 594

News and Reports 598

उत्तिष्ठत
जागृत
प्राप्य
वरान्निबोधत

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

ARISE! AWAKE! AND STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED

Vol. 104 MAY 1999 No. 5

VEDIC PRAYERS

मा नो अग्ने सख्या पित्र्याणि
प्र मर्षिष्ठा अभि विदुष्कविः सन्।
नभो न रूपं जरिमा मिनाति
पुरा तस्या अभिशस्तेरधीहि॥
—*Ṛg Veda*, 1.71.10

O Agni! Please do not break the bonds of friendship which you had with mortals since the time of our forefathers (like Vasiṣṭha). For you are omniscient (*kaviḥ*) and all-knowing (*vidvān*). Just as the beautiful rays of the sun envelope the sky, old age is enveloping this body. Please protect me so that the evil one does not capture me (ie, make me immortal).

रयिर्न यः पितृवित्तो वयोधाः
सुप्रणीतिश्चिकितुषो न शासुः।
स्योनशीरतिथिर्न प्रीणानो
होतेव सद्म विधतो वि तारीत्॥
—*Ṛg Veda*, 1.73.1

Agni is the giver of food (*vayodhāḥ*) like the property inherited from one's father. He is the leader like a learned person, who rules (owing to his knowledge). Agni is loved like a dear guest. And he brings prosperity to the owner of the house (in which he is adored).

स हि क्षपावाँ अग्नी रयीणां
दाशद्यो अस्मा अरं सूक्तैः।
एता चिकित्वो भूमा नि पाहि
देवानां जन्म मर्तान् च विद्वान्॥
—*Ṛg Veda*, 1.70.3

This Agni is known to destroy demons and enemies (*kṣapāvān*). He gives plenty and wealth to those who pray to him. 'O supreme Consciousness (*cikitvaḥ*), O all-knowing Agni, you know all about the birth (ie destiny) of gods and human beings. Please protect living beings.'

Let Us Not Stop!

Two Battlefields

It was the battlefield of Kurukṣetra. The Kaurava and Pandava armies stood facing each other, ready to fight. Arjuna wanted his chariot to be placed between the two armies. His charioteer Sri Krishna did so. Arjuna, the mainstay of the Pandava forces whom defeat could never get under its thumb, saw the opposing army. Something happened to him and, suddenly, he changed. The great warrior declared, 'I shall not fight.' What was more, the weapons fell off his hands, he trembled, perspired profusely, became totally confused, and had horripilation. He declared: 'O Krishna, these are all my own people. To kill them is to commit sin. It is better to live on alms than to covet an empire stained with one's own people's blood. No, I shall not fight.'

The other battlefield is the inner being of a spiritual aspirant. Let us call it the *dharmakṣetra*, because it is a battle for righteousness. The mind, like Arjuna, sees the opponents. What was until then a world-conqueror, whom none could master, shivers now. 'I shall not fight,' it declares. 'To conquer all these—my dear ones? Desires, ambitions, pet ideas, praise, love, feelings, power, glory—all these are my very own. To kill them all for the sake of some unseen supreme Kingdom! No, I shall not fight.'

When Arjuna decided not to fight, Sri Krishna taught him the *Bhagavadgītā*. Having heard and understood Krishna, Arjuna gave up his temporary despondency and rose up to fight. He was instrumental in bringing victory to the Pandavas.

We are concerned with the other battlefield now. The mind that faces the problem described above can be anyone's mind. In fact, many of us spiritual aspirants have similar problems; we get stuck up somewhere. At some point in life, our mind becomes stubborn and will not struggle for Truth any longer. Somehow our inspiration cools down, somehow our hunger for higher life gets sidetracked. We know that nothing short of God-realization is our goal, for we have heard it repeatedly said that the only purpose of human life is to realize God. We also know the path to this goal, and by the grace of God, we may have illumined teachers to show us the way. We read and hear about a number of saints and sages, whose spiritual attainments are a living testimony to the truth of the existence of God. Yet, we do not want to proceed. We are held back somewhere, at some point. Call it the play of *mahāmāyā*, the great charmer, or the trap of illusion, we grow lukewarm in our struggle and get attached to various other things. We begin to philosophize our compromise. Several names are there, ready at hand for our use: duty, responsibility, love, service, selflessness, and a host of other high-sounding words come to our aid when we go for a compromise with this worldly life. Thus, we deify the obstacles to spiritual life.

The Dilemma

When we begin our spiritual expedition, we indeed begin with great enthusiasm, like a child's going to school the first day. We think God-realization is as easy as that, and even feel we are either seeing some light, or hearing some strange voices, or having grand visions. But, slowly the reality dawns in our mind that, far from being blessed with such supernatural visitations, we are yet to begin our spiritual journey, and that the road to God is a long, long one. Gradually, unable to hold on to the goal steadily for various rea-

sons, the spirit dampens and we try to get ourselves busy with various activities. We discover that the world is dependent on us, though the fact is that the world can go on very smoothly without our intervention. We jump in to serve other people, and become engaged day and night in bringing comfort to others. We feel we are indispensable to the world. Unfortunately for us, people can live well— rather, better—if we stay far away from their lives. Such stopping on the way to make a U-turn was what was described as refusing to fight in the beginning.

One must not presume that service to others is being decried here. No, not that. Service is an essential part, a stipulated method, of spiritual practice. The point is, we falsely get attached to various things in the name of service. This type of entanglement has nothing to do with spiritual life.

The Great Verse

Was the *Bhagavadgītā* meant for Arjuna's redemption alone? Far from it. For centuries, the *Gītā* has been inspiring millions everywhere. The whole world needs the message of the *Gītā*. This scripture is specially relevant now, with the present chaos increasing with time, with misery and helplessness escalating day after day. Spiritual seekers of all types will of course find the *Gītā* imperative.

What is the central message of the *Bhagavadgītā*? Swami Vivekananda was a great admirer of the *Gītā*. As in the West, so in the East, he has spoken highly about this scripture. According to him, of all the verses in the *Gītā*, this one is important:

Klaibyaṁ mā sma gamaḥ pārtha
naitat tvayyupapadyate;
Kṣudraṁ hṛdaya-daurbalyaṁ
tyaktvottiṣṭha paraṁtapa.

'Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Pṛthā, for this is unbecoming of you. Shake off this faintheartedness, O killer of foes, and arise.'[1]

Swami Vivekananda says, 'If one reads this one shloka ... one gets all the merits of reading the entire Gita; for in this one shloka lies embedded the whole message of the Gita.'[2] Before trying to understand the significance of Swamji's statement, we must know the real problem we are in. What is it that makes us not fight life's battle but shy away from it? What makes us give up our desire for God? It is the same setback that Arjuna had and which Krishna pointed out—unmanliness. When Arjuna refused to fight, Krishna called it unmanliness. In spite of all the social, moral, spiritual reasons that Arjuna gave for his decision not to fight, Krishna simply saw through it all. He defined Arjuna's predicament in just one word.

What Manliness is Not

I remember a story. There was a government office in some remote area in which a few people worked. Of them, there was a *hero*. As is customary with such heroes, this man hardly worked. He was the self-nominated boss of the office. He was a repository of all vices one can think of. Naturally, he had quite a good following. At the same place worked another gentleman who was a pious soul, and did his duties with sincerity. As it happens in these cases, the pious fellow was very poor as he dared not try 'other' means of income which the hero and his colleagues flourished on. This pious man became an eyesore to the hero-circle. He was targeted by them always for everything. Now, there came a time when the poor gentleman landed in great difficulty: his daughter had come of age and he had no money to arrange for her marriage. He was on the horns of a dilemma now. It was then that the poor, pious fellow really *noticed* the hero of the office, whom everyone called manly. 'With all his seeming vices, if the hero is living so happily, why should I not try once—just once—so that I can marry my

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1. *Bhagavadgītā*, 2.3.

2. Swami Vivekananda, *Complete Works* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama,1990), Vol. 4, p. 110.

daughter off,' thought the poor man. And that was exactly what the hero too wanted. Our hero jumped into action, convinced the poor man, and led him to receive a bribe. Unfortunately for the poor fellow, it was a trap. And he lost the job. The poor man was pious, no doubt, but he did not have faith in piety and goodness.

Such heroes are to be found everywhere in society nowadays. In schools and colleges, these manly people are leaders in mischief; in offices, they terrorise others, do every bad deed under the sun, and go unscathed, apparently though; in business, they scrupulously avoid all justice and moral codes of conduct but seem to mint money. Now, are all such people manly? What we ordinarily call hero-worship is only the worship of such soap bubbles—they grow big, only to burst in the end.

Then there is another extreme. It is those meek simpletons who have no capacity to do anything. They cannot talk, cannot work, cannot think of anything. Just speak to them about a strong wind, and even without its blowing, they bite the dust. Such people are, of course, never manly.

Then there is a third type: those who talk bravely but do nothing. Examples of such manly talkers—who are very unhappy with everything in the world, who want to change everything, but do precious little—are too evident to be cited.

This is Manliness

Thus, manliness does not lie either in arrogant, anti-social, anti-life behaviour or in stupid weakness. What is true manliness, then? Manliness is 'the courage to be' — to use a phrase from Paul Tillich. Manliness is a dynamic force which goads us to noble action. Manliness in men and womanliness in women can be termed 'humanliness' to be all-inclusive. This *humanliness* is the strength of the individual to seek what is good and noble at all costs. It is the innate faith in oneself to achieve great goals.

Real manliness, or *humanliness* to use our term, is seen in several areas of life. The warrior who is ready to face the enemy's bullet with a smile on his face for the sake of his country, the hero who can achieve apparently impossible feats, the genius who strives hard to discover newer things, the poet who brings out masterpieces, the artist who can paint wonders—all these and many, many more such are really manly. To be truthful at all costs, to be pure, to be honest when the whole society tends towards corruption, to hold on to principles in life at any cost, are all manifestations of *humanliness*. However, the greatest show of *humanliness* lies not in achieving success in the external world, but in attaining success in the internal world. That is, true *humanliness* lies in knowing the Self, in realizing God, in knowing the Truth, in being Perfect. The fulfilment of being human beings, or in *humanliness*, is in becoming godly.

When Swami Vivekananda spoke of strength, he meant this strength—a strength which will make us perfect. Though Swamiji wanted us to be physically strong, the goal, according to him, is not physical well-being, or intellectual acumen. He wanted that all of us should see light—to become divine. So, it was this manliness that Swami Vivekananda wanted us to manifest in our lives and hence he emphasized the verse of the *Bhagavadgītā* quoted above. Strength does not lie in fighting, pulling legs, criticizing, hurting, insulting and injuring others, or in talking big things. Real strength lies in abstaining from temptations, in controlling our instincts, in suffering silently, in facing realities with equanimity, in directing our minds towards the real purpose of life. The problem with those of us who stop our struggle midway in spiritual life is, therefore, this: we are lacking in *humanliness*. To proceed and to 'stop not till the goal is reached,' we must shake off our weakness and be up and doing.

All strength, power and glory is within us: what is needed is their manifestation—this our scriptures, and specially

Swamiji, repeatedly assert. Yet, why do we become weak? The Upanishad says, 'The Lord created the senses as outgoing and hence the being looks outside and not the inner Self.'[3] The sense organs give our mind information about the external world. The mind reacts to this information in various ways. When it expresses strong affection or aversion, we call it emotion. It is this emotion that makes us cling to sense objects. Thus, when false emotions take the driver's seat, when reasoning loses its grip over our being, we become unmanly. We lose faith in the higher ideals and cling to lower ones desperately, as gross things and people appear more dependable to us than the unseen God. As Swamiji said time and again, it is the senses and the emotions that bring us down. If we think and act reasonably, if our higher reasoning faculty is active, if our emotions are pure, we shall not get attached to various allurements. The *Imitation of Christ* says: 'It is necessary for you, therefore, to go through all manfully, and to use a strong hand against whatsoever withstands you.'[4]

How to Manifest Manliness

How do we overcome our weakness? First of all comes the goal. We shall have to be clear about our ideal or goal in life. No traveller, however heroic he may be, can be called sane if he has no destination to reach. There may be various smaller goals to achieve, but the only real goal is the highest—the attainment of which brings all peace and joy unto us. Much of our problems are solved, our lives become organized and simple, our thoughts become systematic, when once we firmly fix our aim of life.

The second thing needed is a proper guide who can show us the path to perfection, and also point out pitfalls on the way. We must also have the company of those strong ones who struggle silently to reach the Truth. This company will help us understand the importance and supremeness of the life we have chosen. Thirdly, we must make our will strong. To do that, we must forgive ourselves for the slips and mistakes, the so-called sins. Yes, we all err. And it is in the nature of our wicked mind to brood over these failings alone, and to create a self-image which is one of a defeatist, self-critical, weak model. 'It is not for us,' is what we begin to feel about spiritual life, when we fail repeatedly. The sane method for us is to remember the successes we have achieved in various fields. Our tricky mind gives us only a dismal picture. Yet, we shall have to search, and to our surprise, we shall find that we have been indeed successful in several areas. These small successes will go a long way in making our will strong. A strong determination to work until we succeed will thus have to be cultivated. We must have an uncompromising attitude towards life and reality. Discrimination will check the onslaught of false emotions and ideas.

Now, we have to live with our relatives and friends in society and yet strive for God-realization. We may love our people dearly. Should we shun them then? What should we do with our attachments? So far as our attachments to people and things are concerned, Sri Ramakrishna has given various guidelines to deify them. To look upon a baby to whom we may be attached as Baby Krishna, to look upon a person to whom we may be attached as the manifestation of the Divine, are some of the methods. In service too, we are told to look upon the living beings around us as manifestations of God. Armed with all such armours, we can resume our fight without looking back.

The fifth point is drive. A great scholar interviewed several people, successful in various fields. He questioned them about how they succeeded in life. The one astounding answer he got was: *drive*. Almost all of them had, at one point or other in their lives, felt that they could continue no more. After

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3. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 2.1.1.
4. *Imitation of Christ*, 3.3.5.

repeated failures, a gymnast thought, for example, that he had had enough of gymnastics and wanted to quit the field. Yet, somehow he kept on going, and at last, stood on the victory stand in the Olympics.

One more important help for us to cultivate manliness is to hold on to a regular routine. Come what may, we shall follow our routine. This will save us from several dangers.

The seventh and most important need is God's grace. Strength comes to us from God alone. Our will is ultimately His will. By prayer, we can make our will stronger and stronger and thus become manly, or *humanly*. Being strong with His strength, we can forge ahead and no obstacle will be too great to stop us from progressing along the spiritual path. We must always remember the famous statement that if we go one step toward God, He will come ten steps towards us. We quoted from the Upanishad earlier. The same mantra of the Upanishad has a happy ending: 'Some hero will see the Self by going inward and seeking immortality.'[5] We have to be that one!

We began with the *Gītā* verse and saw what Swami Vivekananda says about it: he says that in that one verse is embedded the entire message of the *Bhagavadgītā*. How can this be possible? We shall see next month. ❐

5. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 2.1.1.

Āṇḍāl, the Tamil Mystic

One day, the devout saint Viṣṇucitta (also called Periyālvār) was digging the soil in his garden of sacred *tulsi* plants. Suddenly, his attention was drawn to a shining, golden-coloured baby lying under a plant. He took the girl home and named her Godā (one born of Mother Earth).

Visnucitta was all his life devoted to Sri Krishna, whom he worshipped by making garlands and offering them to Him in the nearby temple. Though illiterate, owing to the grace of God he once found to his great surprise that he had become a knower of a great many Sanskrit works. After years of worship and prayer, one day he was blessed with the vision of God. The Lord's splendid beauty enchanted Visnucitta to such an extent that he spontaneously composed hymns in His praise. The rest of his life was lived in the mental land of Vrindavana, delighting in the sport of Krishna with milkmaids.

His daughter, Andal, was transparent in her purity. To her, Krishna was the husband, and she was a *gopī*. Her only thought since childhood was that she was the bride of Krishna. All her concern was to be pure and appear fit for Him. She started stealthily putting on her person the garlands that her father had prepared for the Lord, and see her reflection to test her fitness. One morning she was caught in the act and her father scolded her severely for her profanity—garlands used by a human being cannot be offered to the Lord. That night the Lord appeared before Visnucitta and told him sweetly: 'My child, I cherish those garlands which have been perfumed by the love and devotion of Goda.' The stunned father confessed this vision before his divine daughter, and called this celestial being Andal, 'one who is deep in the ocean of divine love'.

IMAGES OF INDIA'S PAST

Incarnation

It was a great war, between gods and demons. The demons were in great difficulty. They sought the help of Kavyamātā, the mother of their preceptor, Śukrācārya. Kavyamata performed austerities. When the gods chased away the demons, headed by Vishnu himself, Kavyamata used her spiritual powers to stall Vishnu's progress. Vishnu called forth his Sudarshana weapon, and using it, killed the lady. The sage Bhrigu, who was observing all this, was enraged at this sacrilege.'You have killed a woman! On account of this sin, you will have to be incarnated on the earth several times,' he cursed Vishnu. So, adds the *Mahādevī Bhāgavata*, a little-known text, Vishnu incarnated several times on earth!

Sanskrit Glory

No less an authority than Will Durant writes in his monumental series, *The Story of Civilization:* 'The language of the Indo-Aryans should be of special interest to us, for Sanskrit is one of the oldest in that "Indo-European" group of languages, to which our own speech [ie, English] belongs. We feel for a moment a strange sense of cultural continuity across great stretches of time and space when we observe the similarity—in Sanskrit, Greek, Latin and English….'

Chandragupta Maurya

A long time before the Grand Trunk Road came into existence, Chandragupta (300 BCE) had constructed a road which was 10,000 *stades* [ie, 1,150 miles] long, stretching all the way from Pataliputra to the North-West frontier. It is reported by Megasthenes, who travelled along this route, that each mile was indicated by a stone with descriptions of by-roads and distances. Incidentally, Chandragupta had a vast army, consisting of 60 million soldiers!

Kanarese in Greece

It is said that a Greek drama was written in the second century CE, which was discovered at Oxyrhynchus. A Greek lady by name Chirition was on a voyage eastward—so the story of the drama unfolds. The ship succumbed to weather's tortures and Chirition was shipwrecked on a Kanarese [in southern parts of India] coast. In the drama, when the local people speak, they speak Kannada language, and not Greek!

✪✪✪✪✪

Sir William Jones
Father of Oriental Research

DR. SATISH K. KAPOOR

We pay our homage to Sir William Jones, a pioneer in oriental research, who passed away 205 years ago in April. Dr. Kapoor, a British Council scholar in history and an associate editor of the forthcoming series, Encyclopedia of Hinduism and Indic Religions, is from Jalandhar.

If one were asked to name the Indians who made a valuable contribution to the study of European history, art, culture and languages, one may draw a blank. On the other hand, European contribution to the discovery of India's past is immense. The site of the Harappan civilization was first noticed in 1826 by Charles Mason; subsequent research by Alexander Cunningham and Sir John Marshall and his team confirmed its antiquity. Ajanta frescoes were discovered by the soldiers of the East India Company, and interpreted by James Fergusson, Lady Harringham, Rothenstein, Griffith and others. James Princep deciphered the Brahmi script of Ashokan inscriptions. William Roxburg collected rich material on Indian plants and earned the epithet of 'Father of Indian Botany'. Thomas Oldham laid the foundation of Indian geology; Macdonell compiled the Vedic Index. Sir John Woodroffe interpreted Tantricism and the Shakti cults. Max Mueller edited the *Sacred Books of the East* besides writing on oriental themes. Sir John Grierson studied vernacular languages in depth and produced the *Linguistic Survey of India.*

Among the earliest to explore the cultural depths of India was Sir William Jones whose fascination for the orient, work on comparative philology, and translation of the Indian classics into English, made him a legend in his lifetime. He was the trailblazer of 'Europe's Oriental Renaissance'.[1]

Born in London on 28 September 1746, and educated at Harrow and University College, Oxford, Sir William Jones came to India as a judge of the Supreme Court, Calcutta, in 1783. By that time he had gained mastery over many languages including Persian, Hebrew, Arabic, Chinese, and Yiddish. He had published a French translation of the life of Nadir Shah, expatiated on the English law, written a grammar of Persian and also a critical appreciation of the works of Anquetil Du Perron, well known for his translation of the Upanishads into Latin from the Persian works of Dara Shikoh.

Jones was at first indifferent towards Sanskrit. But after coming to India the classical language fascinated him so much that he sought the help of learned pundits to gain mastery over it. The initial reluctance of experts to give him a taste of the *devavāṇī* did not frustrate him and he ultimately succeeded in engaging an erudite *vaidya* to teach him Kalidasa whom he later described as the 'Indian Shakespeare'. His grasp over Sanskrit gradually increased, and he rummaged passionately through its literature. The linguistic standard of Sanskrit of the times of Panini impressed him to the extent that he was led to remark: 'The Sanskrit language, whatever

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1. This term has been borrowed from Amaurey de Reincourt, the celebrated author of *The Soul of India,* first published in UK in 1961.

be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than Greek, more copious than Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either....'[2] Although he did not consider either Greek or Latin as having been derived from Sanskrit, he discovered an affinity between them 'both in the roots of words and in the form of grammar than could possibly have been produced by accident.'[3] As a result of Jones' intensive research Sanskrit came to be known as the key language, and gradually became a part of the academic curricula in many European centres of learning.

Jones was convinced that Sanskrit and other Indo-European languages owed their origin to a common ancestor which was definitely not Hebraic. From the fact of similarity of languages he deduced a somewhat monogenetic view of the origin of the races who spoke them. He drew many parallels between the gods of Greece, Italy and Rome, between the manners and customs of these people as also their philosophical systems. He found the Hindu concept of the four *yugas* to be quite in conformity with the Grecian and Roman ages. He further contended that the Hindus had age-old links with the Ethiopians, Persians, Egyptians, Phoenicians, Greeks, Scythians, Chinese, Japanese and Peruvians, and that their common place of origin was Iran. He thus initiated the study of modern ethnology and philology.

Jones declared that he was prepared to reject the Mosaic history if it was found out to be erroneous. It is a different matter that he is sometimes blamed for changing his earlier views on Indian chronology at the behest of other orientalists who were keen to ensure that the biblical tradition of the origin of creation in or about 4500 BC remained intact.[4]

Jones' interest in Indian religions, customs and ceremonies was both academic and impulsive. The wild music at the Kali temple on the occasion of a festival which he attended reminded him of the 'Scythian measures of Diana's adorers in the splendid opera of Iphegenia and Tauris.' He held ancient Indian arts and sciences in high esteem and spoke in eulogizing terms about the Hindu treatises on grammar, logic, rhetoric, music and astronomy. He was amazed to find in the *Manusmṛti* a passage dealing with the legal interests of money and its limited rate in different cases 'with an exception in regard to adventures at sea'—a fact which European jurisprudence could not recognize till the reign of Charles I.[5]

Without disparaging the achievements of the West, Jones lauded the Hindus for introducing the world to the method of instruction by apologue, the decimal system and the game of chess. He provided a rational basis to the Upanishadic philosophy and argued that the ethical doctrines which the Europeans boasted of having introduced to Indians were, in fact, taught to them either by the Ethiopians or by the Indians.

Along with Charles Wilkins, Jones founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal on 15 January 1784, and became its first president. The aim of the Society was to probe the history, 'the antiquities, arts and sciences, and literature of Asia.' And it did a commendable job in the times to come.

Jones' renderings from Sanskrit into English through Latin 'without adding or

(continued on page 568)

2. Sir William Jones, 'On the Hindus' in P.J. Marshall (ed), *The British Discovery of Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 252.
3. Ibid.
4. See, for example, *Historical Dates* by V.G. Ramachandran (General Editor, N. Mahalingam), International Society for the Investigation of Ancient Civilization, Madras.
5. P.J. Marshall, op. cit., pp. 237, 257-59.

Stress—Is it Inevitable?

PROF. S. DANDAPANI

Prof. S. Dandapani, a professor of psychology from Mysore, has attempted a beautiful anatomy of stress, and has also proposed remedies to be free from it.

We have paid the price for civilized life. The Stone Age man lived a primitive life. His sole aim was survival against environmental hazards, freedom from starvation and adequate rest. Modern man has traversed a long distance from primordial existence. Phenomenal progress has been achieved. It is difficult to foresee the pattern of life at the turn of the century. Perhaps robotization would replace manual labour. We would be left with an abundance of leisure. Do we then need more recreation to fill the vacuum? Prosperity can sometimes be more painful than poverty when one does not have to exert at all to make a living. The barometer for measuring progress is not just the life of comfort or super-comfort. Has life made us happier than our ancestors? How do we measure happiness? Can we quantify happiness? A hungry man needs food. One who is thirsty needs water, one needs warm clothing to withstand winter. We can enumerate the physiological needs that we share with all living organisms, including birds and animals. In addition to these basic physical needs, human beings have a number of psychological needs. Need for status, achievement, self-esteem, and belongingness are some of the needs that are generated when the basic needs are met. While fulfilment of the basic needs is certain in a welfare society, the supplementary needs are not fully met. Everyone experiences a certain degree of need-deprivation. It is unavoidable. However, the degree of deprivation would be minimal if the needs are limited. Multiplicity of needs multiplies deprivation and consequent frustration. A needy man becomes greedy. Therefore, even in opulent circumstances a man lives a disgruntled life. Why? Unwittingly or deliberately he has increased his needs. We do not know how to curtail our needs. A few decades ago we never had a TV set, a mixer or grinder, a washing machine. a vacuum cleaner, an air-conditioner or even a refrigerator. Did we lead a miserable life then? Are we in paradise now? We need to ponder!

When our attempts to reach a goal and fulfill our needs are blocked we get frustrated. We have learnt to cope with frustrations. We have a mechanism of frustration tolerence. The degree of tolerance differs from person to person. It is also related to the condition of frustration. A farmer would get frustrated when there is no adequate rainfall. One who lives in town would get frustrated if he did not get the newspaper on time or the milkman failed to turn up. A youngster would be upset over the defeat of the Indian team in a cricket tournament. Rise and fall in stocks and shares would precipitate similar reactions among investors. Increased sophistication carries with it the risk of increased frustration and stress. Having created the necessary conditions for stressful living we cannot possibly transport ourselves to a Utopia where life is absolutely tranquil and smooth. Law-abiding citizens, honest traders, a responsive and responsible government, pollution-free atmosphere, a benevolent boss, an understanding partner in life, obedient children—all exist only in a dreamland. We have grown accustomed to stressful living so much that the absence of stress might perhaps be more stressful. While many have reconciled to the reality of stress and the necessary resiliency, others succumb

and suffer from nervous breakdown. We may need more psychiatrists than physicians because stress-induced ailments outnumber bodily ailments. This can be attributed to the impersonal life city dwellers are compelled to cope with.

We live in an age of anxiety, insecurity, uncertainty and unhappiness. Christian Barnaard, the South African surgeon who performed the first heart transplant, said:

> One out of every seven takes tranquillizing drugs in one form or another in the USA. [Indians are not lagging behind.] In 1955 it was estimated to be close to 300 tons. Of the 125 million children born in 1980, 12 million are unlikely to reach the age of one and another six million will die before the age of five. Of the rest,. many will end up as mental or physical cripples!

Amidst this mind-boggling spectacle, examine the incredible, simple way of living in a small county in Pennsylvania, USA, among the Amish, who emigrated from Switzerland in the early 1700s and who lived a typical biblical 'plain life'. They also live in Ohio, Indiana, and Pennsylvania. *Span* of April 1983 carried an article titled 'The Way of the Plain Folk'. It is too plain to believe. Here is an exerpt:

> The temperature is far below zero, and the morning dark and still. The kitchen is warm and glowing with the light of a kerosene lamp. The smell of fresh bread baking drifts through the house. 4:30 in the morning does not come too early for the children of this farm family. Before breakfast, Elam and his son will tend their dairy herd. They will shovel out the manure pits and haul the manure away. Later, they will spread it on the fields as fertilizer. All the work is done by hand. There are few machines, and no electricity, telephone, or automobile in this farm.

What a contrast to the skyscrapers, bumper-to-bumper limousines clogging all avenues, and the deafening noise of intercontinental jets landing and taking off from J.F. Kennedy International Airport in New York City, just a hundred kilometers away! Having grown so fast, a city like New York or Tokyo has also faced the reality of having to take care of the mentally ill.

In India, there are about 70 million persons—or one in every 11; in other words, one member of every two family units across the nation—who need mental healthcare. On the supply side, there are 42 Government run mental hospitals in this country with about 20,000 beds. With just about 1500 psychiatrists, 500 clinical psychologists and 500 psychiatric nurses, the pressure on the resources for subsidised mental health-care is enormous. The data imply that there are nearly 3000 persons who are potential users of a single bed in Government hospitals for the mentally ill. In contrast, New York and Tokyo each provide more beds for the mentally ill than the whole of India.

The Indian Psychiatric Society had summarised the dismal situation in 1967, saying, 'Even if all the Five Year Plans in the field of health care were only geared to increasing the number of psychiatric doctors, it would still be impossible to provide an adequate number of hospital beds and mental specialists even in the next 50 to 100 years. Stress is at the bottom of all mental health problems.'

The term 'stress' actually originated in Physics. It refers to a force exerted on a system that deforms, destroys or alters the structure of that system. The resulting change is termed 'strain'. In biological sciences it refers to a state in which the vital functioning of an organism is threatened. When our capacity to deal with a problematic situation is inadequate we feel tense and experience stress. Stress can be likened to the tension on a violin string. If the string is too tightly fastened it snaps; if it is held too loose it will not make music. Prolonged exposure to great stress and continued incapacity to cope with it can be injurious to mental and physical health. It is a kind of silent killer.

The symptoms of stress are a kind of

restlessness, apathy and despair, and a marked diminution of zest and zeal characteristic of a healthy individual. Inadequate personal communication can compel an individual to bottle up his feelings and emotions that would generate stress. A false sense of pride stands in the way of plain speaking. He is tempted to assume a facade that conceals inward insecurity. The age-old habit of crying over an agony upon the shoulders of an understanding companion has a cathartic effect. Surprisingly this healthy outlet is sealed by the so-called sophistication characteristic of modern life. The net effect is accumulation of minor irritants that add up to unmanageable stress.

Stress has a marked debilitating effect upon the heart and the circulatory system. As the brain receives a 'stress message', the relevant nerve cells immediately act to stimulate the pituitary gland. This organ then activates other glands to secrete hormones, especially adrenalin, which is the substance that excites various bodily systems, including the heart. Immediately there are increases in systolic blood pressure, heart rate and pulse pressure. Walter Cannon describes these physiological stress reactions as preparatory to 'fight or flight'. The heart works overtime to get blood around the body to those tensed muscles, and the faster it pumps the greater the pressure exerted on the arteries. If the stress subsides, these responses die away. The body can be released from tension to return to a state of equilibrium.

What happens to someone who is constantly in a condition of high stress? Instead of returning to that desirable post-stress phase, the body 'adapts' to the pressures so that the fight-or-flight changes in physiological response become a permanent feature. High blood pressure, contracted blood vessels, a pounding heart and exceptional circulation start to take over. He reaches a stage, which a leading British cardiologist Dr. Peter Nixon has identified as 'Exhaustion Curve'. This leads to stress-induced heart attacks.

How does psychological functioning change under stress? At lower levels of stress, vigilance and alertness are increased and performance is often facilitated. Reaction is quicker and more certain, perception more discriminating, learning and memory more effective. At more intense levels or when coping mechanisms are weaker, psychological performance deteriorates. Precise motor skills are impaired, discrimination and judgement are more inaccurate, learning is slower, memory is less efficient and intellectual problem-so1ving is less effective.

Is a certain amount of stress desirable? Yes, the most effective functioning occurs at an optimum, not a minimum, level of stress. If we were never challenged to our full capacities, we would be less effective and creative. Psychologically healthy individuals seek challenge and excitement and prefer to deal with manageable stress. Similarly in the development of personality the experiencing of some stress leads to the strengthening of resistance and defenses. Students need occasions to be baffled, intrigued, and perplexed, while exploring knowledge and information so as to experience the ecstasy of self-discovery.

Optimum stress is absolutely necessary, since without stress complacency develops. People normally work under pressure—with set target dates and deadlines. When the limit exceeds, it endangers a person. Imagine the situation where there are no deadlines for the tasks to be completed. There will be no charm in it. At the same time, when people overstretch themselves, they experience hypertension and stress. The former is called ROSS (Rust Out Stress Syndrome) and the latter is called BOSS (Burn Out Stress Syndrome). Both are harmful for mental and physical health.

What is the relationship between personality and stress? Dr. Ray Rosemann and Dr. Meyer Friedman, two cardiologists, indicated that coronary-prone people were what they called 'Type A' personalities—driving,

competitive, obsessive, aggressive characters who are typical workaholics, always in a hurry in the office, at home or in a restaurant. In contrast to the clock-watching 'Type A' is the 'Type B'—easygoing, relaxed, ready to take time off to do very little and not really interested in keeping with the Joneses or anyone else. Stress is like electric power. It can make a bulb light up and provide illumination. However, if the voltage is higher than what the bulb can take, it can burn out the bulb.

Here are a few guidelines to reduce stress:

1. Avoid getting overtired by keeping a nice balance between rest and activity.
2. Make sure that you give yourself the time, conditions and a frame of mind to ensure enough good quality sleep.
3. Cultivate the ability to say no to demands put on you if you feel that these are going to cause you feel overburdened.
4. Do not be afraid to admit your limitations, we all have them, but only you can decide in all honesty where your own limits lie.
5. Keep a 'stress diary' in which you note your particularly stressful times during the week. By spotting the critical periods you will be able to apply anti-tension relaxation measures when they are needed to reduce your unwanted responses.
6. Never be shy about seeking help and advice about stressful situations. One of the problems with stress is that it can be self-reinforcing. ❐

The Musical Mystic

The most charming saint of Andhra Pradesh, Tyāgarāja, was born on 4 May 1767 in a village called Tiruvarur, which is now a pilgrim centre. His path to God was music. Endless stories are told about his devotion to Rama, and Rama's bestowing grace on him. Japyeśa was Tyagaraja's brother, who always wanted money. He hated Tyagaraja's devotion, and wanted him to serve the local king. Tyagaraja flatly refused. Angered, Japyesa threw away Tyagaraja's beloved Rama idol into the flooded Kaveri river. For days Tyagaraja wept. After the floods subsided, he searched for his beloved idol in the sand and spontaneously composed several songs on Rama. This search for the idol soon manifested in his search for Rama. Hundreds of his songs, composed in various moods, form the heart of Carnatic music.

In deep anguish of separation from Rama, Tyagaraja sang: 'How long am I to suffer, and how long to bear it? ... If parents abandon, what is the son to do?' It is certain that the saint's prayers were heard. In one of his moving songs, Tyagaraja says, 'O Ramachandra! What else is there for me to aspire for when you have taken my hand and cast your benign look on me.' It is said that the playful Lord told the 88-year-old saint that he would have to take one more birth before attaining liberation. Instantly Tyagaraja took monastic vows (*ātura sannyāsa*), for sannyasa gives rebirth.

Tyagaraja sings of one of his visions: 'Have you forgotten the words of assurance you gave, O Rama, when you were on the golden boat on the Sarayu in the company of the incomparable Sita—that you would take me to you in another five days?' True to his 'assurance' the Lord took his beloved child to him after five days, on 6 January 1847.

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad

SWAMI SRIDHARANANDA

(continued from the previous issue)

नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यो
न च प्रमादात्तपसो वाप्यलिङ्गात्।
एतैरुपायैर्यतते यस्तु विद्वां-
स्तस्यैव आत्मा विशते ब्रह्मधाम॥४॥

Nāyamātmā bala-hīnena labhyo
na ca pramādāt-tapaso vāpyaliṅgāt;
etair-upāyair-yatate yastu vidvāṁ-
stasyaiṣa ātmā viśate brahma-dhāma.
(III.ii.4)

The Ātman is not to be obtained by one devoid of fortitude or strength, nor through delusion or heedlessness; nor through a false notion of (or improper) austerity. But the Self of the knower who strives through these means, enters into the abode that is Brahman.

This mantra and the earlier one (III.ii.3) discussed last month are essential for the understanding of spiritual life. One should not pursue this goal if one is weak in conviction or in any other way. *Balahīnena* does not point only to physical weakness but to lack of courage, conviction and determination to realize the Self. A person lacking strength of character or will-power, or one who is not prepared to pay the price, or is fickle-minded, cowardly, irresponsible, can never attain It. For, the Self is meant only for those who have a strong will-power and an unshakeable determination, and do not accept defeat. Only a strong sense of determination and fortitude are meant by *bala* here. Resolution like that of the Buddha, who sat under the Bodhi tree with the firm determination that he would either reach enlightenment or leave the body: till then he would not leave his seat.

Pramāda is another debarring factor. It is delusion regarding one's original nature. *Unmattatā* is induced by drugs, but *pramattatā* is induced by attachment to unfulfilled desires of the world. There is nothing covetable in these desires, yet doubts assail the aspirant that he has spent his life in vain, without putting in efforts. This kind of self-deception by *pramāda* only deludes the person concerned, but fools none else. Going against one's conscience and showing off spiritual advancement is not the way. Though man is endowed with discrimination which should be sharpened by exposure to such ideas, yet because of *pramāda* he does by thought, word, and deed irreligious acts which go counter to the demands of his inner conscience. He gives a thousand excuses and argues to appease his conscience. Many irreligious ideas and deeds are concealed under a religious garb.

Through austerity, tremendous will-power is generated. This strong will-power is supposed to come through physical control: so one stands with one's hands raised till they atrophy, or lie on a bed of thorns with one leg raised. Such persons start with the best of intentions—to develop a tremendous will-power, to manifest the Divine within, but this purpose is forgotten and it ends up in a meaningless exercise of ritual. The Self is not obtained by *tapasyā* if it is thoughtless torture of mind and body. Even if the mind has to be trained by any form of *haṭha yoga*, such penance should not make one physically handicapped. Do not give inordinate importance to such penances and expect to develop will-power, for then you will remain as much away from the Soul as when you started practising austerity. So goes a parable: Of the two

sons of a fond father, one developed the ambition to become a yogi and the other fulfilled his duties towards his father to be blessed by him. After many years the two brothers met again. The elder brother said that he had achieved something, and to show that he crossed the river and came back by walking on the water. The second brother sent for a boatman, gave him half a pice and he also crossed the river and came back. Then he said to his elder brother that he had spent all his life in achieving a trifle, which he could accomplish for half a pice. So, do not give importance to such austerity for gaining occult powers at the cost of physical ruination. Whatever vows you take in life, whether of *sannyāsa* or any other, be true to them, otherwise it falls in the category of *pramāda*. Nor does spiritual discipline mean that one converts himself into an inanimate, heartless object. It means only that one is to be a master of oneself and with concentrated energy, pierce the veil of ignorance.

If anybody asks: Who are you? your answer should be: I am told I am a divine person but I have not yet experienced it. The divine spark is within everybody. Wherever one finds fire—be it in a lamp, in the cremation ground, or in a goldsmith's shop—it is fire alone. So also, the Divine is immanent in everything. Austerities are conscious efforts to purify oneself by this knowledge that we are divine. We first purify our thoughts, then words, and finally our actions. Thoughts must be purified first because what we think, whether noble or mean, that we become. The 'dirt' is our awareness of being anything other than the Divine, and *tapas* when rightly practised must rid us of this dirt. *Aliṅgāt* also means to be devoid of the use of symbols such as the ochre robe, which is the symbol of renunciation. The monastic vows are taken by a qualified person before God, fire, and an assembly of other monks with the determination to lead a particular type of life. The society sustains him and does not exploit him. This should not be misunderstood to mean that only a *sannyāsin* can realize the Self or Brahman and not a householder. What is essential is supreme renunciation (*parāvairāgya*).

Austerity should not be practised in a mechanical manner or to extremes, because forgetfulness of the goal is one of the biggest stumbling blocks to spiritual pursuit. In spiritual life it is *parāvairāgya* which is essential to keep the goal in view. In this proper kind of *tapas* or renunciation, one performs austerity or renounces the three worlds. One practises detachment and renunciation, so that he can devote all his energy to attain the one goal. So, Sankara explains that even if one goes to all places of pilgrimage (even to Gangasagar), observes vows enjoined by the scriptures, and becomes charitable—no liberation is possible without knowledge (*jñāna*) even in a hundred lives. This *jñāna* is constant awareness of the goal of life.

Adopting all these methodologies, avoiding the pitfalls, accepting the positive directions, and with the correct attitude that the world is a dream, the *vidvān* who wants nothing from the world puts his whole heart and soul into his effort. With the help of these positive mandates and negative restraints, with sustained determination, and becoming a knower, he enters the abode of Brahman, which is the very abode of all virtues, peace, tranquillity, and purity. This does not require him to go anywhere. There is the evolution of his personality in time, and finally, he attains *brahmaloka* or Brahman-consciousness. Evolution means to enlarge one's parameters, to expand beyond one's selfish interests, desires, and will, to identify oneself with others—viz family, community, nation, humanity. Expansion means subduing one's own desires and giving importance to other people's concerns. One identifies oneself with the pleasures and pains of the people he is identifying with. This is expanding the Self beyond the limit of the body, from the individ-

ual dimension to the universal dimension, and the merging of the small ego into the cosmic Ego. He still lives in his body, but he knows that his physical form does not limit him; he belongs to the whole world and the whole world belongs to him. The answer to the question 'Who am I ?' (*ko ahaṁ asmi*) is, 'I am verily Brahman' (*ahaṁ brahmāsmi*). Stage by stage, starting from where he is, the aspirant raises himself to the Absolute.

(to be continued)

Sir William Jones

(contined from page 561)

suppressing any material sentence, disengaging it from the stiffness of a foreign idiom', as he himself observed, earned for him a niche both in the East and the West. These included such immortal works as *The Institutes of Hindu Law,* Gīta Govinda, Hitopadeśa and Kalidasa's *Śākuntalam.* The last translation re-rendered into German in 1791 immediately influenced Goethe and Herder—and through the Schlegel brothers—the entire Romantic movement which hoped to find in the East all the mysticism and mystery that appeared to have died on the approach of science and enlightenment in the West.'[6] Another work of Jones which won him acclaim was *The Mohammedan Law of Succession.* Besides, he collected material on the Indian flora and acquired knowledge about the medicinal properties of some herbs.

Jones died in Calcutta on 27 April 1794 leaving behind the rich legacy of his works. Along with his predecessors, Holwell, Halhead, Dow and others, he laid the foundations on which was raised the superstructure of indology in the next century. The Indian awakening in the 19th century was to a great extent the result of the discovery of its vast heritage. ❐

6. Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization:* Our Oriental Heritage (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1954), p. 392.

The Devotee Teases the Lord...

'Who has ever enjoyed happiness by asking you for it, O Lord! Sita was attached to you and she went to the forest, was taken away by Ravana, and then you yourself sent her away. Surpanakha desired to marry you and lost her nose. Narada wanted to know your *maya* and you made him a woman. Durvasa asked for food and lost his appetite. Devaki asked for a son and you gave him to Yasoda. To attain you the *gopis* had to give up their lords....'

—Saint Tyagaraja

RELIGION AND LIFE

Swami Bhuteshanandaji's Answers to Questions

Why do the Vaishnavas perform sadhana with the attitudes of* sakhya, dāsya, madhura, *etc?

Dāsya, sakhya, vātsalya, madhura and so on are all various human relationships. The Vaishnavas imagine various relationships with God for their spiritual practice, as such relationships can be easily understood. Now, God is *Īṣvara* and I am His devotee—this attitude is known as the peaceful attitude (*śānta*).

Maharaj, who practises the* śānta *attitude?

Narada had done spiritual practices assuming the *śānta bhāva* or peaceful attitude. Hanuman's attitude was that of a servant (*dāsya*). The cowherd boys of Vraja practised the attitude of friendship with God (*sakhya*). Nanda and Yashoda, Krishna's foster-parents, practised the attitude of filial affection (*vātsalya*). And Radha and other *gopīs* followed the sweetheart's attitude for their spiritual practices, known as the *madhura bhāva.* There is a *Bhāgavata* verse [11.12.8] about this:

Kevalena hi bhāvena
gopyo gāvo nagā mṛgāḥ;
Ye-anye mūḍhadhiyo nāgāḥ
siddhā mām-īyurañjasā.

Krishna says here that with the help of various *bhāvas,* many ignorant beings like cows, trees, animals, and so on attained to Him.

How should we perform sadhana?

Regular japa is to be done and then you should constantly think of Him. Japa steadies the wavering mind. However, doing japa like a machine is of no use; it has to be done with feeling. To feel that He is very dear to you, and at the same time to enjoy the bliss of His nectarine Name, is the method. Japa, meditation, keeping holy company, reading religious literature—all these have to be done. Think how you will spend each day fruitfully at the beginning of the day. Plan each day accordingly. Put the present to proper use, the future will take care of itself. You should always try to increase your spiritual practice, and never be satisfied with what you are doing at present. Once contentment creeps into your mind, sadhana caves in. Repeating His name, company of spiritual personalities, thinking holy thoughts, reading spiritual books—all these are necessary so as to proceed along the spiritual path. Does one relish the same type of food everyday? No, one does not. There will be no taste for the same menu and that is why varied items are eaten to break the monotony. Anyway, as I said earlier, use your time purposefully.

The pearl oyster keeps its mouth open for a drop of rain water, when the star *Svātī* appears and is in the ascendent. Once it gets the drop of water, it quietly dives deep down into the sea unnoticed. There, it remains in seclusion till the pearl is formed. These are Sri Ramakrishna's words. You read in the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*:

> One should have faith in the holy name given by the guru and with it, practise spiritual discpline. It is said that the pearl oyster makes itself ready for the rain that

falls when the star Svāti is in the ascendent. Taking a drop of that rain, it dives into the fathomless depths of the ocean and remains there until the pearl is formed. [Cf. *Gospel,* p. 1017.]

To form the pearl means to acquire His essence. To pray to God is to gain His essence, which in other words means not to indulge in hearing too much, but to concentrate on what is relevant only and then to reflect the Truth through one's life.

Does everybody attain higher vision through sadhana? Will He lead us along the right path?

Oh, yes. If the Lord bestows His grace on you, it can happen. Have earnest longing (*vyākulatā*) for God and He will take you along the right direction.

What are the* rajas *and* tamas *of devotion?

Sri Ramakrishna has explained them. The *tamas* of devotion is like this: Such a devotee, says Sri Ramakrishna, literally extorts boons from God like a robber who falls upon a man and plunders his money. His way is to 'Bind! Beat! Kill!'. The *rajas* of devotion is this: the devotee will show off his devotion by wearing expensive silk clothes, a necklace of *rudrākṣa* beads around his neck having gold beads in between. The meaning is, there will be a show of piety, whereas the *sattva* of devotion is an internal affair. There is no parade or pageantry here. It comes from one's inner core and superfluous elements are absent there. Sri Ramakrishna has explained all these, but these are difficult to comprehend.

***What is meant by* Nāradīyā bhakti?**

Narada's way of devotion (*Nāradīyā bhakti*) means selfless (*niṣkāma*) devotion, that is, devotion free from any selfish motive. Remember what Sri Ramakrishna said: When Rama said to Narada to ask a boon of him, Narada said, 'O Rama, is there anything I lack? What shall I ask of Thee? But if Thou must give me a boon, grant that I may have selfless love for Thy Lotus Feet and that I may not be deluded by Thy world-betwitching māyā.' [Cf. *Gospel,* p. 614.]

What is the wealth of a devotee of God?

To be detached from all worldly attractions and to be immersed in the thought of God—this is the wealth of a devotee.

What is the nature of the pride of a devotee?

'I am His devotee'—that is the devotee's pride. It is all right to have such pride.

***Maharaj, what is single-minded devotion* (eka bhakti)?**

Single-minded devotion implies devotion to the One only; the mind is focussed on one single object. He whose mind goes towards God alone is an extraordinary person indeed. The minds of ordinary people stray away in many directions. If they think of God once, they think of household matters ten times. They find it hard to concentrate the mind on God.

***What is the relation between mature devotion and* vijñāna?**

Once devotion becomes mature, everything is one and the same. When one attains supreme devotion, it becomes nothing but the state of *vijñāna*. Here, *vijñāna* does not mean science, but special knowledge (*viśeṣa jñāna*). It is the knowledge that it is He alone who has become all this.

Among devotion, knowledge and yoga, which one is more important?

Whichever *you* prefer. That which is suited to your taste is important to you. It is like someone opting for both, rasagollas and yogurt, when asked to choose between the two. Such a one will practise all paths. ❐

—Compiled by ***Smt. Manju Nandi Mazumdar***

Sister Nivedita Tells Americans Their Obligations to India

PRAVRAJIKA PRABUDDHAPRANA

The path to Nivedita's success was not strewn with rose petals as the West too failed to understand her initially, authenticates the author, who is a nun of Sri Sarada Math, Dakshineswar.

Sister Nivedita once travelled with Swami Vivekananda's disciple, Swami Bodhananda, in southern India and they had to go some part of the journey on an elephant. Neither of them had ever ridden on an elephant before; it was difficult to mount, and frightening. Nivedita somehow got hold of the elephant's trunk and hoisted herself up. But the Swami was hesitant. Gazing up at the enormous bulk of the beast, he stood intimidated and puzzled. Nivedita grew impatient. She called down to him from what seemed to him an unapproachable height, 'Swami, you were born in a country of heroes. Come up! See, I am a woman and I was able to mount it.'

Nivedita surmounted the problem of India's depressed image in India and in the world. She fought the battle for India's recognition in every field of endeavour. Like an army doctor on the front lines, she rescued, gave first aid and lasting cures to the wounded self-image of the nation. Not merely this—she fought hard for the reputation of India in the West.

Nivedita's heroic deeds in India are known: a project for the education of a whole race of women, in the first place, and then the instilling of confidence in, and hands-on help to, Indian geniuses in every field—in science, in literature and in art. But what is equally amazing is the zeal with which she countered the attacks of Westerners on the image of India. She went to England and America in 1899 with the purpose of collecting funds for her educational project for Indian women. And she soon found that she had a message to the West, just as Swami Vivekananda had found when he arrived in the West with a similar purpose. She found her own message after a bitter struggle. In India her lectures had been successful. Indians were eager to hear from an eloquent English disciple of Swami Vivekananda. In America, however, although she began to lecture where Vivekananda did, thinking the audiences would be prepared for her, she found mostly antagonism. It was all right to hear defenses of India from an Indian, but what authority did this foreign lady have?

When in Chicago, an early friend of the Swami's, Mary Hale, told Nivedita that she and her family were not in sympathy with her work, Nivedita felt discouraged. When she was writing her diary about her travels with Vivekananda in India, she had written to Miss MacLeod from the ship on her way to the West, 'Of course the diary must always be private. Absolutely. I should think the Hale girls might be allowed a peep, but I cannot imagine another soul ever.' So Nivedita was surprised at the attitude of those she considered to be in the intimate circle of the Swami's friends. She exclaimed, 'If this is the attitude of Swami's people, how can I ever expect to do anything anywhere?' Miss MacLeod advised her to stand on her own feet. She told

Nivedita, 'You have a message of your own.'

Nivedita decided to speak in the places where Ramabai spoke, not to destroy what Ramabai established but to add a positive impression of Indian women. She hoped to get support for her work from those whose sympathy for Indian women Ramabai had aroused. Nivedita began to do that in Chicago, in Detroit, in Boston. She spoke about the ideals of Hindu women, pointing out their moral genius. On occasion, she had a favourable response from her audiences, but more often they hurled insinuating questions about Indian culture based on the reports of Christian missionaries. The same old question: 'Do the Hindus feed their babies to the crocodiles as a regular article of diet?' 'No they don't.' Meaning to be helpful, at last someone asked her to change the subject to something less controversial. She took up caste and began to explain it sympathetically. But the response was not what she expected. 'Never was a gathering so like a lunatic asylum,' Nivedita wrote to Miss MacLeod. 'Oh! how I recognized the steps that Swami had trodden before me.'

After this painful experience, Nivedita reconsidered her tactics, and wrote out a plan for her talk in Boston. A talk on a different topic. It was a new direction—her own. She was nervous about speaking in Boston, the Athens of America, to a scholarly audience of Harvard professors and the cream of intellectuals—all well-known speakers themselves. She wrote on May 30th to Miss MacLeod about her plan for the speech she was to give at the Free Religious Association two days later: 'They quoted last night some great leaders' saying that a new truth before it is accepted must meet with (1) ridicule, (2) argument, and (3) opposition. When these three are present, know that you are about to win. Oh dear—come on all 3—as hard as you can—I don't mind how *much*, if only you are not everlasting.'

In the same letter, she wrote, 'Mr. Pal precedes me, on "India's Contribution to Free Religion." Oh Yum! My hand just trembles with nervousness!' Nivedita was to speak on 'Our Obligations to the Orient'. Bipin Chandra Pal was also to speak at this meeting about India's contribution to Free Religion. Three weeks earlier, on March 6th, Nivedita had written to Miss MacLeod about another occasion:

> Mr. Pal and I contradicted each other flatly in public last night. I *think* it was his fault.... I never felt so ashamed of myself in my life, for we were fellow guests. About 100 people were hanging on our words....
>
> He had a nasty little attitude to me all the time, and took the opportunity yesterday to point out that my assumption that I knew anything about India was in his opinion mischievous and misleading etc., etc.
>
> ...This is all right, if he will only take care at the same time to say that he equally disapproves of Ramabai and others.... However, poor Mr. Pal also felt so ashamed of the fracas that I think perhaps he will be more friendly in future.

Was Nivedita afraid that Pal being Indian would be more acceptable to the audience than herself, whom they would consider a traitor to her race? Pratap Chandra Majumdar was to speak about Ram Mohan Roy and Keshab Chandra Sen at the same meeting. Nevertheless, Nivedita wrote to MacLeod of her plan, holding to the convictions that she had as a Western woman who had adopted India for her own, who had a greater passionate love for India than many Indians. Nivedita had one great advantage over the Indian speakers: as a person coming from another culture she had a view far more vast and universal, far deeper, and more insightful.

Nivedita had another great advantage over the Indian speakers: she knew well the

Christian standpoint of her audience. She was well aware that the audience believed the civilization of the West superior to that of the East. She said after her speech, 'I should be glad to accept any challenge on the subject that might be offered me by Western people.' She decided to face this subject squarely. She spoke of 'the detachment of civilization from religion—as men and women live for something that is not included in Christianity.' Nivedita saw the rift between science and religion, between truth and mythology, that had occurred in Christianity in the West, and declared that there was no such distinction in India. How different it is in India, she said, where it is expected that every man on his own account practises within the silence of his own soul that religious idea which appeals to him most.

She said that every sect has an idea which is central to it, and that Christianity itself is a sect, if we miss the positive and universal aspect of religion. She pointed out that if a religion is not universal and inclusive, it will be militant against those who do not find salvation by its path. She said:

> It is in this respect that India has a tremendous message for the West today. It is bound to lay the West under an unending obligation. The doctrine of the chosen path is perhaps the doctrine on which all India is agreed from one end to the other.... In India there is an unbroken series of possibilities of worship from fetish worship to the idea that the whole universe is God.

Nivedita made a second very significant point in this speech. She said,

> We of the West are yet to be beholden to the people of the East for the most passionate impulse of simplicity and renunciation in common life that the world has ever seen. I think that the hope of this country, and the hope of England, and of all the luxurious and money-loving West, lies *not in driving poverty out, but in the love of poverty*—in espousing it as the old saints and people espoused it, and this, if it is to come to us at all, will come through the genius of the people of the Orient.

It was in Massachusetts that Nivedita spoke about the 'Ideals of Womanhood, East and West'. In New York she gave a speech on 'The Ideals of Hindu Women'. In these talks she pointed out the moral genius of the Indian woman: in India, woman was worshipped. She later made the statement that 'the great ideal of Indian womanhood was not romance but renunciation.' This is what Western women had to learn from their Indian sisters. On 15 December 1899, she had written to Swami Vivekananda that some ladies were questioning her about what she had learnt from Vivekananda, and that in answer she had told them, 'I only heard one word that he said—Renunciation—and to this day I seem to have gone on hearing nothing else.' She knew as well that renunciation or 'self-sacrifice to the uttermost is the law of life.'

When a few months later, Nivedita went to Breton as the guest of Mrs. Ole Bull, a rich lady, she felt irritated at the accumulation of things that people in the West had. She wrote from there to Miss MacLeod on 18 August 1900:

> As everywhere the evil is—having too much. I think of India, where a few brass vessels are the whole treasure, with relief. ... But here—as everywhere in the West, except where there are servants—people seem to be living with necessities which their own unaided strength cannot meet. For instance, we must have so many sheets and towels, even if there is no one to look after their cleaning and so on. How much more dignified to have less!

She had decided while at Ridgely, the luxurious country estate of Mr. Leggett, a millionaire, that she would spend her time there in religious retreat away from the company of the other guests, in another house on

the property. She spent her time in writing and meditation. When she emerged, she announced that thereafter, she would wear the robes of a nun. Now she had the confidence that she would represent herself dressing as a nun; she felt she was not representing Vivekananda as his follower, but presenting her own message or mission in the West. She stood for the education of Indian women in preparation for the resurgence of India to show the ideal to the world. Indian women will create the future society. The ideal? Of a nation of poor people and monks? Yes, the glory of poverty; the glory of renunciation. And, yes, as ideal for the West. She said, 'We shall owe obligations to India when the destinies of the West and the East with each other are completed. ...When the history of the 19th century comes to be impartially studied, some one or two or three hundred years hence, it will show the influence of the discovery of Sanskrit by the rest of the world.' By Sanskrit she meant Sanskrit culture as well as literature, and that it would be seen to have more impact than the discovery of Greek culture by the West. She also said, no, not the discovery of Sanskrit but the discovery of India. The widespread belief that the civilization of the West was superior to that of the East was the matter she would challenge and fight with her life. Nivedita declared in this lecture: 'I should be glad to accept any challenge on the subject that might be offered me by Western peoples.'

Nivedita had begun by talking of women-making but changed to universalism. She saw the day in the future when, as she predicted in this speech, 'The Christian would be found in China or Japan as here and the Hindu will be found here as often as there, the Buddhist and the Moslem will be found the world over.' She mentioned that the central theme of Indian religion was the process of the complete destruction of the personal in finding the Impersonal. It was a growth towards love and unselfishness. Religion was not a matter of theorizing about God but an experience of the Unity that is God.

At the end of the speech, she was challenged by one Mr. Crosby, who asked her if there was anything in Hinduism so manly and robust as in Christianity. Crosby insinuated that the reason there were no great humanitarian institutions to cure poverty in India was that there was no sense of brotherhood in India. He concluded that Indians were detached and did not care about the conditions of the poor.

Nivedita's answer was that to found a hospital was after all to cure sickness, but the Buddha by great austerities arrived at the way to put mankind in a place higher and more subtle, where sickness and health, comfort and discomfort, happiness and unhappiness were alike impossible. It was not that one should be done exclusive of the other. They were two different expressions of two different religions. Nivedita humbly replied:

> Now that I have said all this, I will confess that like Mr. Crosby, I worship ... the sense of brotherhood which he calls the robust and manly brotherhood of Christianity! I am not so far advanced that I simply stand for the ultimate cure of the thing; I still worship the man who *does*. I have found today that I have been distinguishing between one speaker and another: 'This is the man who has sat in his study and thought; and that is the man who has gone out into the world and done.' And my admiration is for the man who has faced the cannon's mouth. I still ignorantly prefer that manifestation of the divine.

In this way, herself facing the cannon's mouth, Nivedita provided a strong answer to the accusation that Hinduism lacked practical human benefits. The effect of her answer can be seen in the fact that Mr. Crosby had misgivings after this attack and later wrote a

(continued on page 578)

The Necessity of Practice

DR. C. S. SHAH

This article considers the problem of fading of values and tries to find the source of these values in a human being. Those who express real concern for values in society are actually expressing the urgent need to go back to the Atman, the source of all values. Hence the need for spiritual practice, says the author, a practising physician from Aurangabad.

The argument of this book is that we, and all other animals, are machines created by our genes....

My own feeling is that the human society based simply on the gene's law of universal ruthless selfishness would be a very nasty society in which to live.... Be warned that, if you wish, as I do, to build a society in which individuals co-operate generously and unselfishly towards a common good, you can expect little help from biological nature. Let us try to *teach* generosity and altruism, because we are born selfish. Let us understand what our own selfish genes are up to, because then we may at least have the chance to upset their designs, something no other species has ever aspired to.

We have the power to defy the selfish genes of our birth and, if necessary, the selfish memes[1] of our indoctrination.... We are built in gene machines and cultured as meme machines, but we have got the power to turn against our own creators. We, alone, on earth, can rebel against the tyranny of the selfish replicators.[2]

However,

The author asks us to teach or deliberately cultivate the values of generosity and altruism, but does not tell us what is the source of these values in a human being; biology is not, genes are not, external nature is not that source. From a penetration into the inner world, Vedanta long ago discovered the spiritual dimension of human personality, the Atman, as the source of all values.[3]

Such long passages are quoted in the beginning of this article because in them are present *both* questions and answers about various aspects of human evolution.The scientific truth that the genes *are* selfish and morality will be established *only* by deliberately cultivating these virtues must be accepted by first developing faith in these statements. Therein we see the importance and the constant need of practice and efforts to develop altruism, morality, ethics, and selflessness: value system in short.

Faith can be established in these truths only when we hear such truths from a person who himself knows about them. A medical student develops faith in the sayings of his teacher because he believes that his teacher knows the anatomy and physiology of the human body. Moreover, very soon, he is sure to convert this faith into knowledge by direct experience during the experiments in Physiology and dissection in Anatomy.

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1. *Meme* is the term coined by Dawkins meaning a *cultural* unit of evolution.
2. Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 2-3 and pp. 200-1. Quoted in Swami Ranganathananda, *Practical Vedanta and the Science of Values* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1995), pp. 82-4.
3. Swami Ranganathananda, op. cit., p. 84.

The point is: Faith always comes before knowledge. This is the conscious or unconscious rule of the game. The time-span between this aspect, faith, getting converted into the other, knowledge, depends on perseverance and sincerity. As described above, medical *faith* becomes medical *science*. The same is the case with all other physical sciences. Later on, with the certainty of faith becoming converted into knowledge, faith and knowledge are seen as one and the same.

In the science of spirituality, teachers come on this earth in fairly less numbers and after long time-gaps. Moreover, one cannot convert spiritual faith into knowledge easily and in a short duration of time as in the case of other sciences. It may take a full lifetime or even more to have even the required faith—not to speak of knowledge. One hears that God exists, but cannot immediately see or have personal experience of this reality. The result is that faith is shaken. Similarly, 'All is Brahman; the same Spirit dwells in the heart of all; one can experience visions of one's Chosen Ideal'—such spiritual truths cannot be realized by the majority of us at the present stage of our evolution. We start doubting the possibility of developing a value system in life. Ideas like selflessness, altruism, love, and morality all appear far-fetched and utopian. Hence, their very practicality is doubted and the efforts needed to realize these truths in our life is not put forth. What is the *source* of qualities like altruism and generosity? The question baffles most scientists.

What prevents us from accepting statements made by the scientists of physical sciences, not to speak of accepting spiritual truths and attempting to realize them in our lives? As stated in the beginning, Dawkins has already given us the cause of such behaviour: the selfishness of the genes. These genes make us cling to this tiny body-mind complex without allowing us to enter the hearts of other human beings. They do not allow us to develop our individuality into a personality.

I am reminded about the story of a mother monkey with her baby placed in a tub of gradually rising water level. Initially, as the water level rises, her efforts are to save both herself and her baby; but when the water reaches her nose, she places her child under her feet and tries to save herself at the cost of her baby. This is the difficult-to-shake-off selfishness of the gene which Dawkins is probably talking about.

By efforts (sadhana) we have to develop that value system wherein this tendency is reversed. Can there be an attempt to save or serve others *even* at our own cost? That type of altruism *can* be cultivated by giving up clinging to the body-mind complex and realizing our true identity as the Atman.

Sri Ramakrishna and others came to this earth as teachers of these truths and taught the world two facts: (1) that they themselves had realized these truths in their lives, and (2) that it is possible for everybody to have the experience of the same in their own lives as well, provided we undertake the requisite and prescribed spiritual disciplines (sadhana).

The word sadhana can be easily substituted for 'the methods of experiment'. Just as there are prescribed methods of experiment in physics or chemistry, without which the desired results will not be obtained, similarly, without prescribed sadhana, desired results will not be seen in spiritual science. It may take just two minutes for a certain reaction to occur in a chemistry experiment; in the science of spirituality it may take a few months or many years or lives even, for the results to become manifest. It is all a part of the science and the experiment we are engaged in.

Moreover, results depend on the quality

of the instrument, the ingredients and equipment used in scientific experiments. For example, the type of telescope will determine astrophysical research; or the quality of microscope determines biomedical observations. Similarly, the quality of the human mind will affect the results in the science of spirituality.

In this process, values are born. The generating factory of values is the experimental attempt in one's life to convert faith into knowledge or realization. The broadening of vision, altruism, compassion, and so on culminate in universal love and total freedom. These are spiritual qualities—the milestones on the path of spiritual progress—not found in genes. If, however, our attempts at sadhana are sincere, somebody is bound to guide us to the right path. Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, and other direct disciples are such guides along with many others in every religion of the world. We should have firm faith and then proceed; the torchbearers are standing to help eternally. Moreover, the light of the acquired value system will shine forth for us to guide us further on. The benefits far outweigh the trouble one has undertaken in the beginning of sadhana!

The necessity of practice is thus established to realize the treasures of spirituality. It is the method to explore and develop the capabilities of the mind to convert faith in the value system to the knowledge of the ultimate Reality. It also brings about the necessary changes in the body and mind of the aspirant to reflect the newly acquired qualities. This was clearly seen in the life of Sri Ramakrishna where many bodily changes were observed, documented, and verified. Similarly, changes in the mind allow us to grasp the limitations of our sense perception and reach the higher realm of spiritual perceptions: to cross human consciousness and enter divine consciousness.

Thus, the necessity of sadhana is to delimit the scope of the genetic stronghold on human lives and

> to teach (ourselves) generosity and altruism by upsetting the design of selfish genes; and develop the power to deliberately cultivate and nurture a pure value system. Everyone can so organize one's life as to get at least a glimpse of this truth....
>
> Selfishness of genes, if *not* checked by developing a value system by undertaking conscious and deliberate spiritual disciplines, will lead to stagnation of the human evolution at the sensory level, create human and social psychic distortions, and eventually destroy the human race and life. Certain conditions are to be fulfilled to avoid this tragedy of the derailing of the evolutionary process. The first condition is to understand that there is a spiritual dimension to human evolution. Evolution has now become psycho-spiritual rather than somatic.... The necessity is to recognize and accept our own uniqueness in this regard. There is an urgent need to understand that efforts should be directed to a future life in a supernatural world equally, or even more, as in this external materialistic world.... Sadhana (spiritual discipline) is the force necessary to achieve this end.'[4]

In the very beginning of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna,* Sri Ramakrishna makes the observation that the goal of human life is to realize God. From our discussion above we can easily see that modern science is also coming to the same conclusion. Instead of using the words 'realizing God', these modern scientists (biologists in particular) use the words 'cultivating values'. Every attempt at strengthening our value system takes us Godward. In God-realization we have the real basis for value system. Swami Vivekananda

4. Ibid. Summary of passages, pp. 101-3.

has compressed the whole of the science of spirituality in his famous dictum, 'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within....' This is also another way of saying the same thing, of trying to express the value system as described above. Vedanta philosophy has the same message as its essence.

Vedanta teaches us unity of existence: of both living beings and non-living things. Our day-to-day behaviour betrays our lack of faith in accepting this unity as true. To act consciously and to attempt to lead a life that bridges the gap between us and others is what spiritual practice does.

One is astonished to see how in his life Sri Ramakrishna undertook intense sadhana of various kinds and every time reached the ultimate spiritual experience by crossing the limits of the selfish genetic system (body-mind complex). One hundred and fifty years ago he showed that through this evolutionary trend beyond the biological level a new human being rooted in spiritual consciousness should evolve in the future. He also showed us the way to reach there. Through intense effort, with conscious and sustained practice we can develop a sound value system for ourselves. The same thing was told in the *Gita,* five thousand years ago, by Sri Krishna. Modern scientists are coming to similar conclusions today. A sincere study of Vedanta should help them a lot in this field. ❐

Sister Nivedita Tells Americans ...

(continued from page 574)

letter of apology to Nivedita. With utter humility, Nivedita concluded, 'I hope I have said something that is clear and intelligible. In these big themes that one so little grasps one's self, it is difficult to say anything which may make the conception for which one is striving clear to others!'

This speech, 'Our Obligations to the Orient', given to a liberal Christian intellectual audience, was one of her most successful speeches in America. In the audience were Dr. Lewis G. Janes, Thomas W. Higginson, Julia Ward Howe, Pratap Chandra Majumdar, Bipin Chandra Pal, Abd-Allah Shehadi, Professor Edward H. Griggs, Mr. Crosby, and Edna Cheney, who was her hostess for ten days. Nivedita's courageous lecture tour in the West did not make much of an impression until this lecture. But she did succeed in making personal contacts with people who would represent her cause, forming the Ramakrishna Guild for Help. The Leggetts gave her a generous donation of a thousand dollars for her work in India and published her booklet about the project, and also her book, *Kali the Mother*, from the sales of which she intended to support the school. Another couple gave her five thousand dollars. In all she collected about seven thousand, and so a system of continuing support was started. Nivedita was then able to go back to India to reopen her school which the Holy Mother had inaugurated with the prayer, 'May the girls that it trains be ideal girls.' From this school emerged the women who would show the ancient Indian path of renunciation and service to the modern world. ❐

Vedanta and Mathematical Logic

SWAMI ATMAPRIYANANDA

This brilliant essay, in two parts, needs careful study. Even if you have some preliminary idea of the first part, you will enjoy reading the second, to be published next month. Swami Atmapriyananda is principal of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira, Saradapitha, Belur Math.

Limitations of Mathematical Formalism in Arriving at Truth

Intellect plays a major role in our quest for Truth. Over the past few decades, thanks to the enormous strides made by electronic computer technology, attempts at computer simulation of human intelligence are being made in a big way. This area of lively controversy that is arousing tremendous interest in recent years is referred to as *artificial intelligence,* often shortened simply to 'AI'. There is a point of view, referred to as *strong AI,* which asserts that mental qualities of some sort could be attributed to the logical functioning of *any* computational device, even the simplest ones, what to speak of sophisticated ones like computers. Computer science and computer technology are still very young disciplines. Supercomputers are being devised, and as years pass, these devices will work faster and faster, will have larger and larger rapid-access memory stores, more and more logical units and will be able to perform larger and larger operations in parallel. All this is *actually* happening, and happening at a staggering speed. The idea behind the *strong AI* is that mental activity is simply the carrying out of some well-defined sequence of operations via a specified calculational procedure, frequently referred to as an *algorithm.*[1]

The question now is: when we seek to arrive at truth through our intellect, are we, as the *strong AI* protagonists would have us believe, simply following some algorithm, or are we taking some other, non-algorithmic route—perhaps intuition, instinct or insight? Scientists and particularly mathematicians, with their wonted precision, would like to accurately find out what mathematical truth is, form clear-cut judgements about the truth or falsity of mathematical questions. David Hilbert, Georg Cantor and Henri Poincare were the three pioneers who developed powerful methods of mathematical proof, thanks to which mathematics made great progress in the late nineteenth century. Consequently, mathematicians were gaining great confidence in the use of such powerful methods. This confidence was rudely shaken at the dawn of the twentieth century when, in 1902, the British logician and philosopher Bertrand Russell came up with a paradox that now bears his name. We will now briefly discuss this paradox and then see how the desperate attempts on the part of the mathematicians to build a formal system free from internal inconsistencies had once again to face further serious problems.

This paper was presented at a seminar titled 'Vedanta: Concepts and Application' which was held at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, from 26 to 30 December 1997 to commemorate the centenary of the founding of the Ramakrishna Mission.

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1. Roger Penrose, *The Emperor's New Mind* (Oxford University Press), p. 17. [Hereafter, *Emperor's New Mind.*]

1.1. Russell's Paradox

Russell's Paradox, which Cantor had anticipated, was a Frankenstein which emerged out of the same type of very general mathematical set-theoretic reasoning that the mathematicians were then using. Only Russell was using them in a rather extreme form, and it had a boomerang effect. To explain Russell's paradox in a simple way:

We begin by observing that a set can easily have elements which are themselves sets, eg {1,{2,3},4}. This raises the possibility that a new set might well contain itself as one of its elements. We call such a set an *abnormal set*, and any set which does not contain itself as an element we call a *normal set*. Most sets are normal, and if we suspect that abnormal sets are in some way undesirable, we might try to confine our attention to the set *N* of all normal sets. We now ask: is *N* itself normal or abnormal? Evidently it is one or the other; it cannot be both. Russell's paradox is now the observation that if *N* is abnormal, then it must be normal. We see in this way that each of our two alternatives is self-contradictory, and it seems that it is the assumption that *N* exists as a set which has brought us to this impasse.[2]

Put in a slightly technical way[3]—
Consider a set *R* defined in the following way:

R is the set of all sets which are not members of themselves. Thus, *R* is a certain collection of sets; and the criterion for a set *X* to belong to this collection is that the set *X* is itself not to be found amongst its *own* members.

Is it absurd to suppose that a set might actually be a member of itself? Not really. Consider, for example, the set *I* of *infinite sets* (sets with infinitely many members). There are certainly infinitely many *different* sets, so *I* is itself infinite. Thus *I* indeed belongs to itself! How is it, then, that Russell's conception gives us a paradox? We ask: is Russell's very set *R* a member of itself or not? If it is *not* a member of itself then it should belong to *R*, since *R* consists precisely of those sets which are not members of themselves. Thus, *R* belongs to *R* after all—a contradiction. On the other hand, if *R is* a member of itself, then since 'itself' is actually *R*, it belongs to that set whose members are characterized by *not* being members of themselves, ie it is not a member of itself after all—again a contradiction!

In very commonplace terms, there are two amusing ways of expressing Russell's paradox:

(1) Suppose there is a library, in which there are two catalogues. One of these is a set of all the books in the library which somewhere refer to themselves. The other is a set of all the books in the library which do not make any such reference to themselves. These catalogues themselves are two books, which should therefore be listed in any of these two catalogues. Now, the paradox is: in which catalogue is the second catalogue itself to be listed?[4]

(2) In a certain village, there is a barber who shaves only those who do not shave themselves. The paradox is: Who shaves the barber, or in other words, does the barber shave himself?

Russell himself, in his well-known book *My Philosophical Development*,[5] confessed that he was profoundly disturbed by the discovery of this inherent contradiction in the framework of logic that he and Whitehead had so carefully constructed. The primary aim of

2. G.F. Simmons, *Topology and Modern Analysis* (McGraw-Hill), p. 6.
3. *Emperor's New Mind*, pp. 101-2.
4. Ibid.
5. Bertrand Russell, *My Philosophical Development* (Unwin Books), pp. 58-59.

their *Principia Mathematica* was 'to show that all pure mathematics follows from purely logical premises and uses only concepts definable in logical terms.' The discovery of this contradiction, the now famous paradox, Russell confessed, 'put an end to the logical honeymoon' that he had been enjoying. Russell called it a 'misfortune' which not only rattled Whitehead, but threw Frege completely overboard. Russell wrote: 'Frege was so disturbed by this contradiction that he gave up the attempt to deduce arithmetic from logic, to which, until then, his life had been mainly devoted. ... he took refuge in geometry and apparently considered that his life's work up to that moment had been misguided.'[6] Russell further wrote that other similar older paradoxes were known to Greeks, but then these could be dismissed by mathematicians as not relevant to their subject, while the contradiction discovered by Russell could not be so easily ignored. As an amusing illustration of the older paradoxes may be mentioned the following best known example. This is 'the one about Epimenides, the Cretan, who said that all Cretans are liars, and caused people to ask whether he was lying when he said so. In its simplest form, it can be put as follows. Suppose a person says, "I am lying." If he is lying, it is a lie that he is lying, and therefore he is speaking the truth; but if he is speaking the truth, he is lying, for that is what he says he is doing! Contradiction is thus inevitable.'[7]

Russell and Whitehead then set out developing a highly formalized mathematical system of axioms and rules of procedure, to translate all types of correct mathematical reasoning into their scheme. The rules were carefully selected so as to prevent the paradoxical types of reasoning that led to Russell's own paradox. This Russell-Whitehead scheme, although a very monumental piece of work, was not only very cumbersome, but rather limited in the types of mathematical reasoning that it actually incorporated. David Hilbert embarked upon a more comprehensive scheme and he intended (i) that it would include *all* correct mathematical types of reasoning for any mathematical area, and (ii) that it would be possible to *prove* that it is free from contradiction. Hilbert hoped that mathematics would then be placed, once and for all, on an unassailably secure foundation.[8]

1.2. Mathematical Formalism and Godel's Theorem

Alas for mathematical formalism, the Hilbert programme was smashed to smithereens in 1931 by the brilliant young mathematical logician Kurt Godel, who came up with a startling theorem now known by his name. Godel's Theorem is perhaps one of the most profound discoveries of this century, the importance of which is being appreciated more and more in the light of the *strong AI's* claim that making judgements, coming to conclusions, arriving at mathematical truth are all a process of algorithmic thinking. We give below the statement of Godel's Theorem, and its brief explanation, as found in Roger Penrose's monumental work *The Emperor's New Mind*:[9]

> Any such precise ('formal') mathematical system of axioms and rules of procedure *whatever,* provided that it is broad enough to contain descriptions of simple arithmetical propositions and provided that it is free from contradiction, must contain some statements which are neither provable nor disprovable by the means allowed within the system. The truth of such statements is thus 'undecidable' by the approved procedures. In fact, Godel was able to show that the very statement of the consistency of the axiom system itself, when coded into the form of a suit-

6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. *Emperor's New Mind,* pp. 101-2
9. Ibid.

able arithmetical proposition, must be one such undecidable' proposition.

1.2.1. The Completeness and Consistency Questions in Hilbert's Formalism

A formal mathematical system is one which contains a set of axioms and rules of procedure which are supposed to be self-evident. It is further supposed that mathematical statements could be written down as strings of symbols. The point of view that one could in fact thus dispense with the meanings of mathematical statements, since they are regarded as nothing but strings of symbols, is called mathematical formalism. Hilbert's hope had been that if a comprehensive formal system is given in a particular area of mathematics, say, arithmetic, in which we shall be provided with a definite criterion for the *correctness* of mathematical proof for any proposition in arithmetic, such a formal system of axioms and rules could be *complete*. The meaning of completeness is that it should be possible to decide the truth or falsity of any mathematical statement that can be formulated within the system.

There is one more requirement, that of *consistency*, in addition to the completeness mentioned above. Suppose we assume that a certain mathematical proposition, say P (written down in Hilbert's formalism as a string of symbols, no matter what it actually means!), is syntactically correct in its construction, ie it satisfies all the notational rules of the formalism. The proposition P would then be assigned the truth-value *TRUE* if it is a theorem, ie if P is provable within the system. On the other hand, it would be assigned the truth-value *FALSE* if ~P is a theorem. (The logical symbol ~ in the formalism means 'not', or 'it is not so that ...'). The consistency requirement would then assert that there must be no string of symbols P for which both P and ~P are theorems, for it would then mean that P could be both *TRUE* and *FALSE* at the same time!

1.3. How Godel's Theorem Dealt Mathematical Formalism a Deadly Blow

Without going into detail, we might state that Godel's Theorem asserts that it is possible to find *true* propositions P which have no proof within the formal system spoken of in the previous section. Nor does the negation of such a statement, namely, ~P, have any proof within the system. Thus, neither P nor ~P is provable within our formal system. Godel's Theorem, therefore, not only exposes the necessary limitations of formalized mathematical reasoning or logic, but shows something else more remarkable: we are able to see the truth of a statement, although it is not formally *provable* within the system. This exposes the incompleteness of the formalist's notion of truth. Whatever consistent formal system is used, there are statements that we can see *are* true, but which do not get assigned the truth-value *TRUE* by the formalist's proposed procedure. In fact, Godel was able to show that the very statement of consistency of the system itself is one such proposition that is not provable within the system.

How did we then, in the first place, see that the unprovable proposition P is indeed a *true* statement? Godel showed that we needed insights from outside the system. And the beauty of these insights is that they must lie outside any algorithmic action. This kind of insight is an example of a general type of procedure known to logicians as a *reflection principle:* by 'reflecting' on the meaning of the formal axiom system and the rules of procedure, and convincing oneself that they indeed provide valid ways of arriving at mathematical truths, one may be able to code this insight into further mathematical statements that were not deducible from these very axioms and rules. This type of 'seeing' that is involved in a *reflection principle* requires a mathematical insight that is not the result of the purely algorithmic operations that could

(continued on page 584)

Non-dual Truth and Spiritual Practice

BOB KINDLER

The author from Hawaii, USA, bases his article on the Hastāmalaka Stotra *of Sri Sankara.*

The illumined being, enlightened about every facet of creation and able to detach from them at will, perceives nothing but the indivisible Spirit pervading all of existence. What is this condition like? How can one practice it? It seems so direct and simple, yet is so deceptively easy to lose sight of.

The 'practice' of an Advaita Vedantist, if the term can be used, is extremely subtle. It proceeds upon the premise that the inner Self called the Atman is always pure and stainless and ever accessible—*'as tangible as a fruit resting upon the palm of one's hand.'* Thus, the Advaitist views the ascent into the spiritual realm, that journey which demands sacrifice, self-surrender, and self-effort, as an already accomplished fact. Perfection is the essence of his nature, all else is a superimposition over that verity. Whereas many other practices prescribe rigorous exercises that tax the body, wear out the life-force, and deceive the mind by embroiling it in thoughts of power and gain, the art of maintaining awareness of Reality constitutes the only necessity for the Advaitist. This does not mean that periods of intensity will not be necessary. The Advaitist, perceiving a need for these disciplines for various reasons, will undergo them in characteristic fashion, but with an entirely different attitude.

Sadhana, spiritual discipline, is necessary for those who still perceive the presence of ignorance in the mind. As long as an Advaitist is aware of this imposition, so long will he exert himself. For such as these, the practice of sadhana is an artform to be performed with grace, expressing or concretizing what is subtle and yet unseen. Two things distinguish the sadhana of an Advaitist from many other practices. First, as mentioned, the Advaitist practises with the idea that perfection is already the essence of his or her nature and that any impeding ignorance, itself actually illusory and non-existent, will fall away naturally as one proceeds towards the Source. The idea here is that darkness cannot persist around a sun, and the Atman, the true nature of the practitioner, is that eternal Sun of Knowledge that shines forever, lighting all pathways and destroying all obstructions.

Next, as long as sadhana is necessary, the Advaitist indulges in it with full commitment and with an attitude of acceptance and positivity. Any dragging of the feet or desiring of fruits is seen as a detriment to the attainment of the goal and not in keeping with the original idea of unity and eternal perfection. Armed with the resolve that one's true nature is divine, the practitioner swiftly approaches the gates of non-dual realization and leaves behind the wanderings characteristic of less direct paths.

A third aspect of Advaitic sadhana rounds out this consummate perspective. Once ignorance is utterly gone, the illumined ones continue to perform sadhana in order to keep the internal and external organs—the instruments of divinity—clear and clean. What is more, this show of self-effort is continued to serve as an example in order to help and serve other struggling beings attempting to free themselves from the bondage of relative existence.

The orientation of Advaitic sadhana and what it seeks to accomplish is unique. Whereas many practitioners view their sadhanas as a way of being grounded in daily life, the Advaitist simply remains grounded in the

Spirit. This transforms daily life and allows it to conform with the dictates of the highest power operating in the universe, leaving it free from the often misguided interference of the individual ego. Other approaches leave the aspirant open to variables based on hopes and desires, an indeterminable condition that has them always looking to the past or the future instead of realizing the Truth here and now.

An analysis, then, reveals that the Advaitic sadhana is based upon the realization of the permanence of non-dual Truth mixed with reliance upon the grace of an absolute power. This is far superior to the approach of seeking for answers amidst relative existence while exercising an uninformed personal self-effort. The Advaitic path closely adheres to the advice, 'Know the Truth and the Truth shall set thee free,' and follows the assertion of 'Seek thee first the kingdom of heaven.' Other paths subject the aspirant to an ongoing search devoid of the abiding knowledge of the Self. In short, the former remains constant amidst the movements of life while the latter rushes forward and lags behind in turns.

Without the advance knowledge of who they truly are, without continually affirming that identity with every breath, beings fall again and again into the snares of Maya. This undermines the good effects coming from their respective disciplines, whatever they may be. Furthermore, whereas many practitioners undertake their sadhana with the idea that the Self undergoes evolution, the Advaitist never gives validity to such imaginings. He is aware that the Atman never learns, grows, or expands. Pure Consciousness is indivisible and immutable, never subject to the changes and fluctuations of the body/mind mechanism and nature. It abides eternally as Pure Being. Those who identify with It perpetually experience immediate and spontaneous perception and never deviate from that condition, despite the many apparent movements of the mind dipped in the frantic stream of relativity. Thus, the Advaita Vedantist's only practice, if it could be called such, is perfect knowing. ❐

Vedanta and Mathematical Logic

(continued from page 582)

be coded into some mathematical formal system.[10]

We conclude our discussion here on the limitations of the formalism of mathematical logic with the following philosophical assertions by Penrose, making it a starting point of our attempt to understand Vedanta:

> The notion of mathematical truth goes beyond the whole concept of formalism. There is something absolute and 'God-given' about mathematical truth. ... Any particular formal system has a provisional and 'man-made' quality about it. Such systems indeed have very valuable roles to play in mathematical discussions, but they can supply only partial (or approximate) guides to truth. Real mathematical truth goes beyond mere man-made constructions.[11]

(to be continued)

10. *Emperor's New Mind,* p. 110.
11. Ibid., p. 112.

Exploring Dynamic Interplay Between Opposites in Human Mind

DR. SAMPOORAN SINGH

Dr. Sampooran Singh from Chandigarh is not new to our readers. He has presented here a scholarly and novel idea of exploring the opposites of the human mind.

Mysticism and Modern Science

Eastern mysticism is based on direct insights into the nature of Reality. Physics is based on observation of natural phenomena in scientific experiments. During the last few decades, compelling parallels between the worldviews presented in eastern philosophies and western sciences have been presented.[1]Recently, the nature of consciousness was the subject of two conferences, one in Moscow and the other at Cambridge University.[2] The Russian scientists have come up with the idea of a 'life field' beyond our physical concepts of time, space and the known electromagnetic and gravitational fields. At Cambridge, a new scientific approach was discussed, which would include subjective experience as valid information, and address all forms of human experience (perception)—including intuition, spiritual experiences and mystical encounters. There was a powerful sense that if conscious awareness of the nature of consciousness could be developed in a comprehensive way, the possibility of people across the globe developing an understanding of themselves and of each other would be tremendous. Thus, western science has made deep inroads into the cathedrals of eastern mysticism.

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1. Cf. Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics* and *The Turning Point*, and Gary Zukav, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters.*
2. Joan Walton, 'Scientists Tune into Consciousness', *New Science*, Winter 1996.

Indian mystics tell us that they experience all things and events as manifestations of a basic oneness—an all-embracing unity called Brahman, which is the Self of all. The notion that all opposites—light and darkness, winning and losing, good and evil, and so on—are merely different aspects of the same phenomenon is one of the basic principles of the Indian way of life. It is a dynamic interplay between two extremes.

In the Indian tradition, cause and effect are cyclic patterns. Cause and effect are in time. Cause becoming effect and effect becoming cause—all are within the field of time. The cause interacts with the environment to become the effect; the effect then takes up the role of the cause, interacts again with the environment, and becomes the modified cause, and this cyclic pattern is repeated endlessly.

The Tao of the Chinese tradition is similar to the Brahman of Vedanta. The idea of cyclic patterns in the notion of Tao was coined by polar opposites—*yin* and *yang*. All manifestations of the Tao are generated by the dynamic interplay of these two polar forces. The *yang*, having reached its climax, retreats in favour of the *yin*; the *yin* having reached its climax, retreats in favour of the *yang*. In the realm of thought, *yin* is complex, female, and intuitive mind while *yang* is the clear, rational male intellect.

This article explores (1) the dynamic in-

terplay of opposites in the light of the Indian tradition (which is the law of causation) and the Chinese tradition (which is the *yin* and *yang* principle), and (2) the transcending of these opposites to reach Oneness (Brahman or Tao). It aims at a scientific understanding of life at all levels of human mind-brain-body system.

Cause and Effect

The simple example of dynamic interplay of opposites in the external field is circular motion with non-variable speed. As the substratum of this motion is Brahman, the word 'Brahman' is written in the centre of the circle in Fig. 1. The extreme points of the oscillation are cause and effect. Human mind

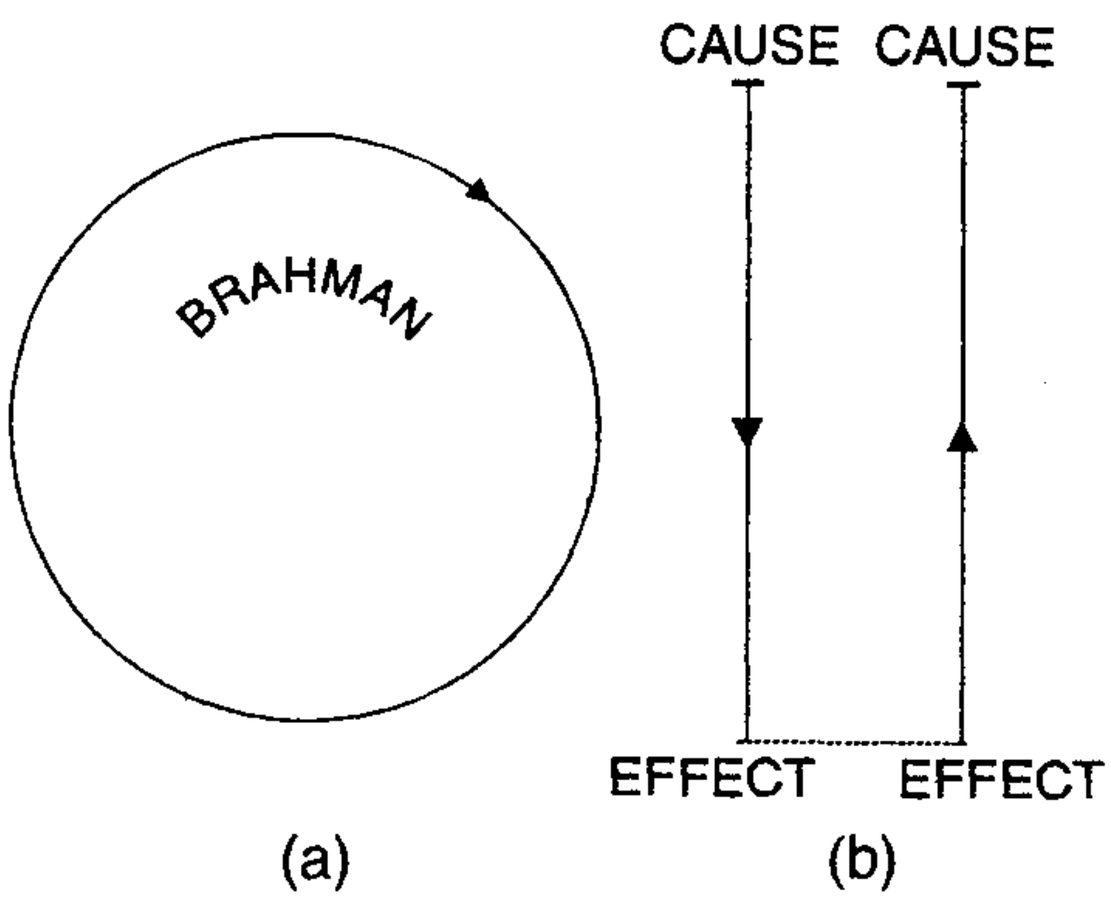

Fig. 1. (a) A cyclic movement in the external field, and (b) a linear projection in the inner sensorium of human mind-brain-body system

can only perceive this motion in a linear way, as it can only perceive it as a sequential structure [that is, considering events one after another] which is typical of our thinking and speaking. We therefore postulate that the cyclic event in the external field is projected on the inner sensorium [the sensing apparatus] as linear—an oscillation between two extreme points on one plane.

In the language of physics, we postulate that the human mind-brain-body system represents a harmonic oscillation in a one-dimensional projection of uniform circular motion in nature. My fellow scientist, Ramandeep S. Johal, discussing the unidimensional oscillator of classical mechanics, wrote, 'It is well known that the oscillating particle has the highest velocity at the centre, but it is the lowest at the end or turning points.'[3] This implies that the mind constructs two times—one at the two extreme points and the other at the centre.

For exegetical convenience, to make the complex story of linear oscillation of thought in the inner sensorium a little easier to tell, we compare it to a pendulum. Taking the pendulum to one extreme is the cause, and that it goes to the other extreme is the effect. Now, the oscillation goes on and what is effect becomes the cause, and vice versa. The friction is minimum at the end points but is maximum at the centre. If the movement of thought is represented as dissipative oscillation of a pendulum, it shows that due to resistance or friction (with the environment), thought dampens and then ends. As thoughts are due to spontaneous disintegration of cultural belief structure, one thought is succeeded by the next in quick succession. Each thought with a different velocity constructs a different psychological time. So, we simply state that thought constructs two psychological times—one near the extreme ends of oscillation, and the other at the centre of the oscillation.

How Thought Works

The inner sensorium perceives linear projection. In linear projection, time slows down as it reaches the end, turns around, and

3. Ramandeep S. Johal, 'Interplay Between Opposites in Human Mind: A Harmonic Oscillator Model'. The author is grateful to Ramandeep Johal for sharing thoughts and providing many useful suggestions private communication.

then accelerates again, only to slow down again. This goes on in endless linear projections. In any projection on the human inner sensorium, the circular movement with non-variable speed in the external world will appear as an oscillation between two opposite points with psychological *variable* time. The psychological time is not amenable to measurement. Both cause and effect are in psychological time.

This suggests that when human mind experiences an event in the external world it converts it into an experience with variable (changing) psychological time—the time spent at the end points is different as compared to the time spent in exchange of energy with the environment. It also suggests that when time is transcended, the polar opposites coalesce and cease to exist as separate entities, and it will appear as a dynamic unification of opposites, which implies that there is only the oscillation of pure consciousness. The mind perceives the higher-dimensional reality directly and concretely. The pure consciousness expresses itself as intuitive wisdom, and love and compassion. Obviously, intuitive wisdom is at a higher quantum energy potential than knowledge (information or rationality).

There is no probablity in nature as every aspect is according to fixed laws. Nature *first* expresses itself in a pure mind, so 'the original (ie, Brahman) and the mirror-image (pure perception or pure cognition) are identical,' in the words of Erwin Schrodinger.[4] It is well known that the first stage prior to recognition and naming is a state of pure perception or pure cognition, which is a non-verbal or thought-free perception (*nirvikalpa jñāna*). We postulate that pure perception is also free from probablity and as such the laws of quantum physics are not applicable to the inner sensorium. From this pure perception we proceed to thought, recognition and naming (*savikalpa jñāna*).

A moment, however small, is defined as time in which the cycle—from cause to effect and effect to cause—takes place. In Fig. 2, the X-coordinate shows the moment where polar ends of the linear representation is cause and effect. The Y-coordinate shows the velocity of thought. The velocity approaches zero at the two ends and becomes maximum at the centre. Fig. 2 shows an artist's view of the trajectory of thought on one plane. Due to friction or resistance which is identification—desire, ideal, motive, verbalization—the trajectory is a continuity of change. The resistance will decrease the trajectory so that, eventually, thought comes to a halt and the next thought takes over in quick succession. This shows perpetual movement of thought in motion. The movement of thought appears to be a chaotic phenomenon but on deeper introspection we see order beneath chaos, though not apparent. The symbolic-dualistic frame of reference of mind experiences an event/proc-

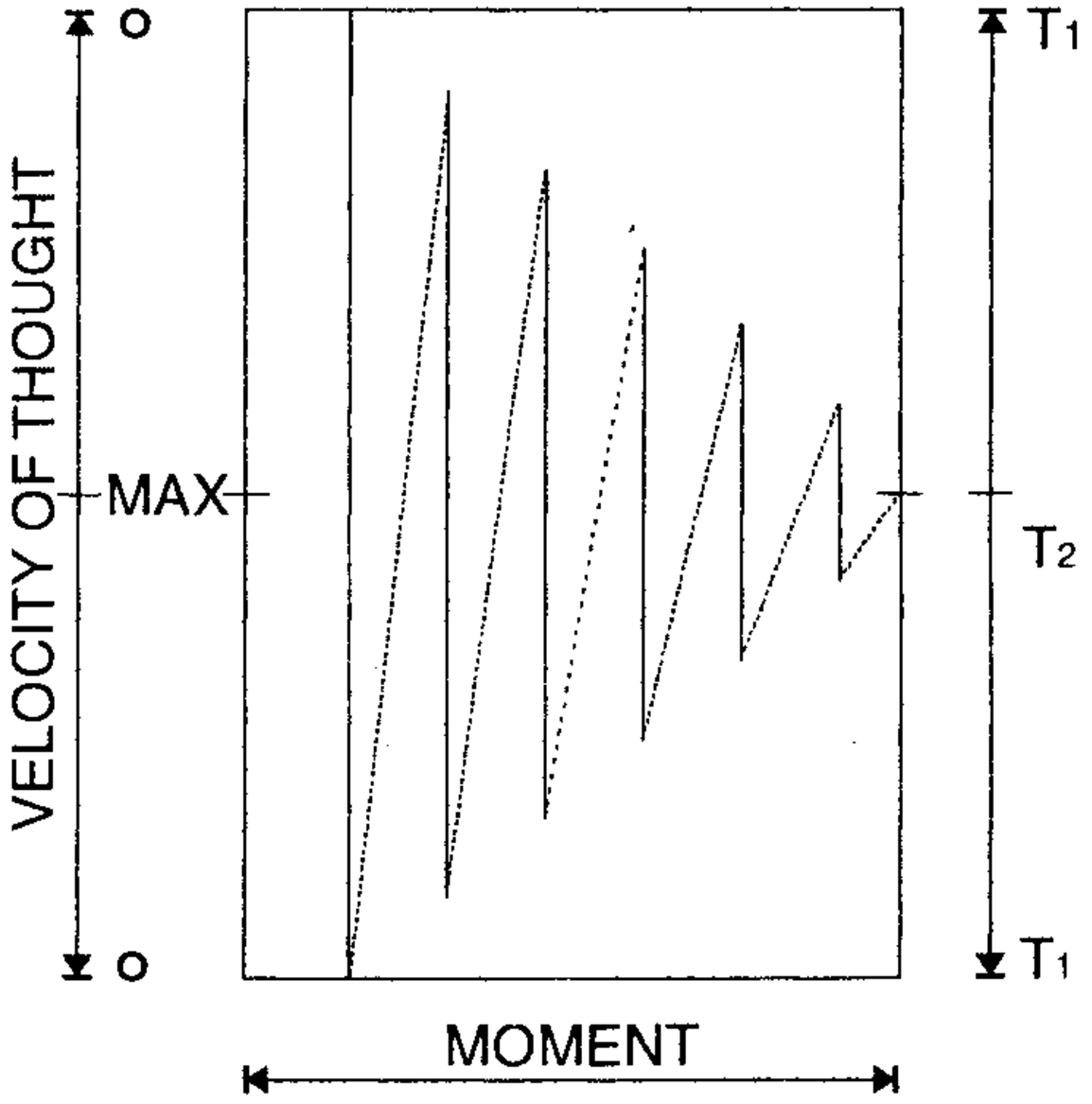

Fig. 2. Here X-coordinate shows a moment and Y-coordinate represents the velocity of thought and time spent at the end points (T_1) and during energy transduction with environment (T_2)

4. Erwin Schrodinger, *What is Life? & Mind and Matter* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 146.

ess/thing in two time-frames: T_1 and T_2 where $T_2 > T_1$ and $T_1 + T_2$ is the total time of the moment. The conditioned mind oscillates between the past (cause) and its future projection (effect) without touching the real present, according to the laws of nature. It is highly improbable that quantum mechanics with its emphasis on probability can explain the dynamics of the inner sensorium.

There is Only Now

The cause is past sentiments, emotions, feelings, desires and so on, stored in the brain as cultural belief structure, or memory-picture of the past. The cause is responsible for the behaviour patterns, which are cerebral, neurological, chemical, glandular and muscular. Yet a subtle illusion has entered into this memory-picture. This was first announced by St. Augustine, and recently confirmed by Bertrand Russell, Erwin Schrodinger and Alan Watts. Bertrand Russell summarized the viewpoint of St. Augustine in the words, ... past and future can only be thought of as present: "past" must be identified with memory, and "future" with expectation, memory and expectation being both present facts.'[5] Schrodinger stated, 'Mind is always *now*. There is really no before and after for mind. There is only a *now* which includes memories and expectations.'[6] In the words of Watts, 'From memories you infer that there have been past events. But you are not aware of any past events. You know the past only in the present and as part of the present.'[7]

We now postulate that mind experiences a variable time—the end points of oscillations (cause and effect) are at different times than the time spent for energy transduction with the environment.

5. Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945).
6. Erwin Schrodinger, op.cit., p. 145.
7. Alan W. Watts, *The Wisdom of Insecurity*, (New York: Vintage, 1968) p. 82.

The Chinese Tradition (Yin *and* Yang)

In the Chinese tradition, *yin* is the intuitive mind and *yang* is the rational intellect. Intuition comes in 'no-time' or a timeless moment; so, oscillation of the mind is between time and timelessness. The end of oscillation is the causal state: there is no energy-transfer with the environment but energy flows from the Absolute. The quantum energy potential of the mind-brain-body system rises and there is intuition in a mind with the non-dualistic frame of reference. There is no previous recording. This mind can stay in a timeless state. Due to some momentum of the *yang* (the identification or verbalization), the frame of reference relapses from the timeless state to that of time—or, from the non-dualistic frame to the dualistic frame of reference.

Fig. 3 represents the Chinese tradition of *yang* and *yin*. The X-coordinate represents the moment where the two polar ends are *yang* and *yin*. The *yang* is in time and represents the past memory-image. The symbolic frame of reference represents the *yang*. It makes a quantum jump to *yin* in the timeless moment, which is the non-dual frame of reference of the mind spectrum. The *yang* represents the intellect aspect of the conditioned frame of reference. The *yin* represents the intuitive aspect of the unconditioned frame of reference. The Y-coordinate represents the minimum

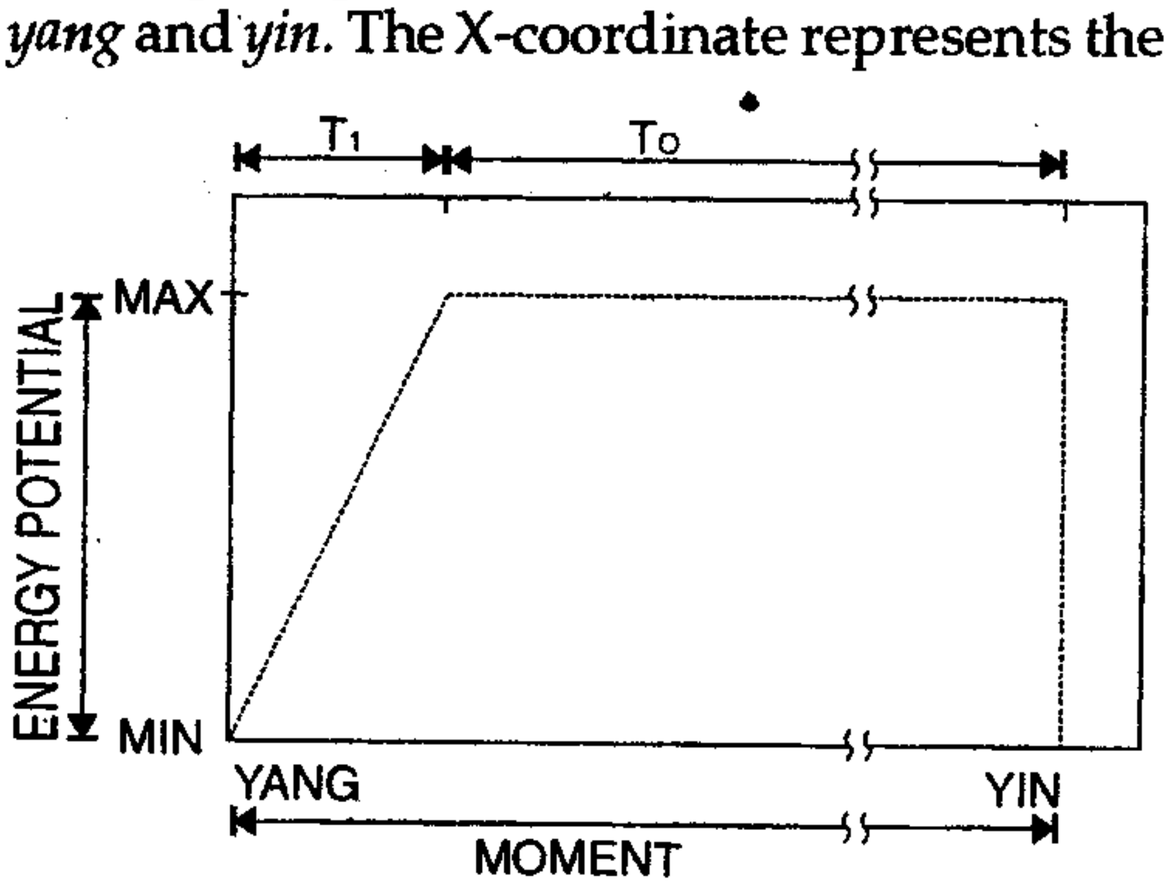

Fig. 3. Here X-coordinate shows a moment and Y-coordinate the quantum energy potential of the system. Yang *is in time* (T_1) *and* yin *in timeless state* (T_2)

quantum energy potential of the dualistic mind which makes a quantum jump to some hierarchic level of the Absolute, the universal Consciousness. In the non-dual frame, *yang* and *yin* coalesce and both vanish (or the opposites vanish), and there is only the expression of Tao. The perception of Tao or Brahman or universal Consciousness happens, and this flowers into intuition or direct insight, which lies outside the realm of the intellect. Intuition is at a higher quantum energy potential than knowledge (relative reality or information gathering). Intuition is fundamental and knowledge (information) is a derivative.

The basic aim of understanding the dynamic interplay of opposites in a human mind seems to be to silence the thinking mind and to shift the awareness from the rational to the intuitive mode of consciousness. It implies working for higher levels of awareness by understanding the dynamic interplay between opposites in the human mind. This understanding, and living in the light of that understanding, result in a quantum jump from successive consciousness to universal Consciousness.

Lower Organisms and Human Beings

There is a rudimentary self-awareness or consciousness in lower organisms but no thought process, which implies no ego, no dualism, or dishonesty, or falsehood. At the level of the human being, there is self-awareness of thought, a higher level of expression of consciousness. During the psycho-social evolution of the individual over uncountable aeons, human beings have constructed the cultural belief structure which invariably gives rise to dualistic thought. Dualism is a synthetic product, and is the source of all human greed, competition etc, and results in pain, misery and travail. Many eminent scientists like Arthur Eddington, Werner Heisenberg and Erwin Schrodinger have advocated jettisoning the synthetic world of dualism, or play of opposites, to imbibe the holistic nature of the natural systems where every event/process/thing is interrelated and interconnected. Individuals have to learn to jettison dualistic thought or play of opposites and to live in non-dualistic thought where the opposites coalesce and vanish, or in other words, we need dynamic interplay of pure science (where science takes in its ambient the subjective and the objective) and spirituality (the science of life).

The symbolic-dualistic frame of reference of the mind spectrum is governed by linear chains of cause and effect. It is a system open to environment and closed to the Absolute. The non-dual frame of reference is non-linear, involving multiple feedback loops of higher quantum energy potential. It is a closed system to the environment and open to the Absolute. Obviously the non-dual frame is at a higher quantum energy potential, or a higher level of ecological awareness, or a higher hierarchical level of expression of consciousness than the symbolic-dualistic frame of the mind spectrum. The quantum jump from the symbolic-dualistic frame to the non-dual frame implies a paradigm shift from self-awareness to understanding. Understanding bestows intuition and spontaneity. If man wants to survive, he has to make a paradigm shift from dualistic frame to non-dual frame of reference of the mind spectrum; or in other words, to make a quantum jump from successive consciousness to simultaneous consciousness or universal Consciousness. It implies living in symbiosis with nature, or living in communion with nature.

Self-Assertive vs Self-Integrative Potentials

The symbolic-dualistic frame of reference of mind has the characteristics of self-assertive potential—rational, analytical, reductionist and linear. The self-assertive qualities are competition, domination and power. The non-dualistic frame of reference of mind revels in ecological awareness, integrative poten-

tial—intuitive, synthetic, holistic and non-linear. The integrative values are cooperation, partnership, compassion (ie care and concern for all) and so on. Living in the self-assertive potential of mind leads to the concept of the cause and effect of *yang* and it leads to pain, sorrow and travails. On the other hand, living in the self-integrative potential leads to *yin* (intuition) and deep ecological awareness, and leads to freedom, peace, happiness and bliss.

The self-assertive potential of mind is based on anthropocentric (human-centred or ego-centred) values and is leading humanity to self-annihilation or self-destruction. The self-integrative potential of mind is based on eco-centric (earth-centred, or cosmos-centred — universal oneness) values. At this critical stage, practically all disciplines are working on oneness or integration—the paradigm shift in science, at its deepest level, implies a shift from physics to life sciences. Ecologist Joanna Macy writes about 'the greening of the self', philosopher Warwick Fox has coined the phrase 'transpersonal ecology', philosopher Henry Skolimowski talks about 'eco-philosophy', or 'eco-dharma', and cultural historian Theodore Roszak has written about eco-psychology. We have to introduce 'eco-ethical' standards into science, education and in all aspects of our daily living. It implies that we need a profound change in our worldview, from a mechanistic worldview of Descartes and Newton to a holistic, ecological view. It leads to a quantum jump (or a paradigm shift) from self-assertive potential to self-integrative potential that has the capacity to lead humanity from annihilation to survival. Let us work jointly for our survival.

Concluding Comment

The dynamic interplay of cause and effect or the law of causation is in time. The inner sensorium of the human brain experiences an event or thing in two times, called T_1 and T_2. The cause and effect are in time T_1 and interaction with the environment is in time T_2, where $T_2 > T_1$.

According to the Chinese tradition, the *yang* is in time and *yin* represents the timeless state. The symbolic-dualistic frame of reference is in time, and when time is transcended, the symbolic-dualistic frame makes a quantum jump to the non-dual frame of reference of the mind spectrum. The intuition and spontaneity express themselves in a non-dual frame of reference. Deep ecological awareness is spiritual or religious awareness or non-dual awareness.

The aim of human life is to transcend time and to learn to live in the intuitive mode of mind. Intuition is fundamental and rationality is a derivative. It is intuition or direct insight that can resolve all human challenges and save humanity from annihilation. ❐

A Prophetic Assurance

The atmosphere in this country began to change from the very day of the advent of Sri Ramakrishna. Indians are gradually regaining faith in themselves.... As a result of the wonderful work of the Master in the spiritual field, the soul-power of India has been reawakened. You will find that India will make wonderful progress in every direction. Swamiji declared that religion forms the backbone of India. That backbone had been broken as it were.... The Master's advent has set right that backbone again and reinvigorated it. Now India will make the world wonder at her achievements....

—Swami Sivananda

Why Swami Vivekananda Appeals to Me

JIRO AIKO

We have given below a slightly edited text of a speech delivered by Jiro Aiko, Advisor, Sony Corporation, on Sunday, 28 June 1998, at the public celebration of the 136th birthday of Swami Vivekananda organized by Nippon Vedanta Kyokai, Japan, a branch of the Ramakrishna Order.

I have been asked by Swami Medhasananda to deliver a speech on why Swami Vivekananda appeals to me. I accepted this request with much enthusiasm, and I will tell you the reason in course of my talk. It will be to my delight if my view based on personal experience is of any help to you.

Most of you are aware of the teachings of Swami Vivekananda and his life. But for those who may not know, let me start with a very short introduction of the Swami. He was one of the greatest spiritual leaders modern India gave birth to, who introduced its precious spiritual heritage with Vedanta as its core to the West. He was born in 1863, and during his short life of less than 40 years he achieved many great things, among which we have to count his participation in the first World's Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893. He attended the congress as a representative of Hinduism, but he outshone completely other participants representing Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, etc and captured the attention of the enthusiastic audience. He stressed a universal religion and the spirit of tolerance. The Swami was a disciple of the famous saint of Dakshineswar, Sri Ramakrishna, after whose demise, the Swami set up the Ramakrishna Mission in order to propagate the teaching of his guru in a practical way.

I did not know much about Sri Ramakrishna or Swami Vivekananda before I met three years ago Mr. Vishwanathan, who was then the representative of the State Bank of India in Tokyo; some of you too may know him well. He gave me a pamphlet about Swami Vivekananda on a certain social occasion. I read it, and was strongly impressed by an anecdote in it. It was about Sri Ramakrishna who guided Swami Vivekananda into a mysterious experience with his extraordinary spiritual power. I had earlier read a similar story, in Paramahansa Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi,* and had taken interest in the special ability of a guru to lead his disciple to a transcendental dimension. When I met Mr. Vishwanathan the next time, I told him that the pamphlet was quite interesting. Then he told me about the Ramakrishna Mission in Zushi, and promised me that he would take me there. Unfortunately it was not realized, as he was transferred back home before long. I did not give up. I learnt the address of the Mission through the Embassy, and decided to go there by myself. In this way I came to know about Swami Medhasananda. Before I left the Mission on that visit, the Swami gave me a bag full of books and pamphlets both in Japanese and in English about Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Yoga and Hinduism. I read most of them with much interest.

By the way, in my past career, on many occasions I had to explain Japan and the Japanese language to foreigners. That was part of my job. But I had so little knowledge about Buddhism that I could not dilate upon it. It was so because Buddhism is very difficult to understand, and mere reading does not enable you to deliver a lecture on it. But several years ago I happened to be hospitalized for a

few months for a serious surgical operation. During the rehabilitation I had nothing to do but read. Abundant time being available, that made me collect a pile of books on Buddhism. I read at random. At first I felt as if I was trying to understand a new language without a dictionary and without a knowledge of its grammar. I could not understand even its paradigm. But gradually I came to be attracted by a vague idea emerging out of the darkness, and I wondered how I had not been able to follow such an interesting subject until then. Later my interest was extended to other related subjects like Indian Philosophy, Hinduism and Yoga. At the same time I came to know the reason why Buddhism is difficult to understand: It is not possible to express the truth reached by Buddha in language or through logic. Language or logic can be quite effective to deal with phenomena in sensual or material domain, but these are ineffective to deal with the transcendental dimension. So, in order to express such a dimension in an approximate way you have to use paradox, metaphor or poetic expression as in the case of Buddhist holy scriptures. That is why this religion is difficult for those intellectuals who are accustomed to the western way of thinking entirely based on reason.

In Japan after two major social changes, namely, the Meiji Restoration and the defeat in World War II, Buddhism has almost been wiped out from the surface of people's consciousness. Such is the case especially with intellectuals. I think we are now at the threshold of the third social change, and we have to review our value system fundamentally in order to weather through it. It seems to me quite significant to look, from a new angle, at Buddhism which is still alive at the subconscious level of the Japanese people. Such an idea was floating in my mind when I learnt about Swami Vivekananda.

Here I have a small pamphlet in my hand which introduces Swami Vivekananda's teaching. Let me read the first few sentences. 'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal.'

This is the very message of Buddhism. In Buddhism they say *'Issai shujo shitsuu Bussho,'* which means that all sentient beings have the potential to be a Buddha. Let us manifest this reality through our efforts: this is the message of Gautama, the Buddha, to us. In my opinion there is not much difference between Buddhism and Hinduism. Both of them emerged from the great spiritual stream of ancient India. The Mahayana Buddhism was considerably affected by Hinduism and, although Hinduism replaced Buddhism almost completely in India, Hinduism absorbed much from Buddhism. Hinduism teaches that the essence of the universe, which is called Brahman, is the same as the essence of the individual, which is called Atman. If you realize this truth you will be freed from the onerous cycle of birth and death. Buddhism, on the other hand, emphasizes the notion of *śūnyatā* (or emptiness) as the core of their cosmology. They view all phenomena in the universe as *śūnyatā,* as stated in the *Prajnaparamita Sutra.* But in reality both of them point to the same truth using different expressions to bring out different stress: *śūnyatā* of phenomena and *pūrṇatā* of the Essence. Besides the theoretical side of the teaching, the Buddhist system of practice required for the attainment of Truth is almost the same as Yoga—the Hindu system of practice.

Swami Vivekananda says, further: 'Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy—by one, or more, or all of these—and be free.' According to him, roughly speaking there are four categories of Yoga, namely, Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga. Let me explain them just briefly. Karma Yoga means carrying out one's social and professional duty perfectly without the slightest attachment to the outcome. Of course it is very difficult—almost impossible—for ordinary people to do this, but this is one of the paths to the final goal, that is enlightenment. This paths suits

those who are active and energetic. Bhakti Yoga, the next one, is devotion to a deity. It is practised with prayers, rituals, offerings and all other forms of love and service. Sri Ramakrishna is considered to have attained his first illumination through this path. This one suits those who are rich in their emotions. The third one is Raja Yoga. This is the path of meditation. It includes observance of precepts, breathing technique, sitting posture which is called *āsana,* etc., as the proper preparatory steps for right meditation. In Japan this sitting posture is itself generally considered as Yoga. Swami Vivekananda called this Yoga 'psychic control'. Those who have a tendency towards mysticism are advised to follow this path. The last one is probably the most difficult. Jnana Yoga is, in a word, philosophy. It seems this path is open only for a limited number of people. They must be exceptional, for transcendental Truth is beyond reason. Thus what Swami Vivekananda means by the word Yoga is much wider than what the Japanese conceive by it. It includes almost all that is done for the salvation of the soul or God-realization, not only in Buddhism but in all other religions as well. Here yet another message of the Swami becomes relevant. In his view all religions lead to the same final goal. Only the routes through which people reach there are different according to their historical or climatic background. So everyone has only to follow a path which suits him best, and make his utmost efforts in that direction. At the same time followers of all religions or sects should be tolerant towards each other.

The question staring at me has been: How to motivate Japanese intellectuals to take interest in Buddhism? In this, as I have told you, Swami Vivekananda was a great help to me. Many books written in Japanese about Buddhism are so difficult to read that we want to keep them at a distance. Many authors do not put in much effort to make their books intelligible to laymen. Some of them may themselves not know what they are saying, and hide the fact using cryptic expressions. Swami Vivekananda's way of writing is very clear and powerful to me who had become annoyed by the poor quality of many authors.

Not only Swami Vivekananda but other authors who tried to introduce the great Indian spiritual and philosophical heritage to the West from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of this century had to explain it in such a way that people of a different culture could understand them clearly and precisely. They had to express in different ways even what cannot be expressed. At that time India was under British rule, and it was completely overcome by the superior material civilization of the West. But that tragic situation in history compelled them to show that the nation was never behind Europe on the spiritual plane. It may have been a subtle kind of nationalist movement. Their spiritual self-assertion took them beyond the borders of their country, and they became spiritual champions of the East taken as a whole. It is significant indeed that we can utilize their achievements now under a different historical circumstance.

But a more important and encouraging fact for us is that such a great spirit as Swami Vivekananda did appear on earth in this very century. His speeches in Chicago were in a sense nothing special but simple statement of truth. But the very fact that such a simple message could move the souls of the audience so deeply and so vehemently proves the existence of a transcendental Being whom we can neither see physically nor express by word, and the greatness of spiritual energy. And I think that understanding this the first step in our task of rebuilding fundamentally the civilization of mankind which is now at a crisis. ❐

Reviews and Notices

WOMEN'S ROLE IN KŪḌIYĀṬṬAM: By L.S. Rajagopalan. Published by The Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute, 84 Thiru V. Ka. Road, Chennai 600004. 1997. Pp. xxxiv+224. Rs.250.

Kūḍiyāṭṭam is an opera-form of performing arts of Kerala, which is not as widely known outside that state, as Kathakali or Mohiniāṭṭam. The whole performance is in Sanskrit and is believed to be the only surviving form of the traditional presentation of Sanskrit plays in India. Despite being in Sanskrit it continues to attract an appreciable number of spectators. The plays, as presented today, were choreographed by a Kulasekhara king some ten centuries ago. It is said that the gestures (*abhinaya*), and costume and make-up (*āhārya*) do not follow the rules prescribed by the *nāṭya śāstras.*

Traditionally, Kudiyattam was performed in temples by those belonging to the Nambiar community of Kerala. The male artistes are called Chakkiars or Nambiars and the females, Nangyars. In most parts of India, till very recently, women were not allowed on the stage. When this taboo came into vogue is a moot point. The female roles in dramas and operas were enacted by males. This practice continues even today in the Yakshagana of Karnataka, Kuchipudi of Andhra, and Gotipua of Orissa, to name a few. Public performance of dance and music concerts were restricted to the temple dancers (*devadāsis*) and the devadasi system got degraded due to unfortunate socio-cultural factors when women were exploited by the royalty and the courtiers. It needed the courage and dedication of Rukmini Arundale and the likes of D.K. Pattamal to break this tradition and to appear on stage. In Kerala the great poet Vallathol was instrumental in making women appear in the female roles. The first female to give a Kuchipudi dance performance was Yamini Krishnamurthy.

It is therefore of much significance that in Kūḍiyāṭṭam women enacted the female roles on the stage and also sang and recited verses. It is this aspect that L.S. Rajagopalan of the Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute, Chennai, has tried to highlight in the book under review. While traditionally in Kerala women and the lower castes were not allowed near the sanctum of the Hindu temples, the Nangyars were respectfully conducted to the sanctum.

From Rajagopalan's account, it is not very clear how important a role the Nangyar was assigned. Currently, according to him, they have only very short roles to play. However, the tenth chapter of the *Bhāgavata,* which deals with the birth and life of Sri Krishna, is entirely enacted by a single woman artiste and it goes by the name of Nangyar-Kūṭṭu. The Kudiyattam plays are very long and were enacted over many days. Therefore, at the commencement of the play each day, there is a flashback recital of the story finished earlier. This is known as *nirvahaṇam,* which is an important aspect of the opera and is conducted by the jester (*vidūṣaka*). In Nangyar-Kuttu, the nirvahanam also is done by the Nangyar. The Nangyar-Kuttu therefore needs a highly versatile histrionic talent.

An interesting aspect of the opera is that when Surpanakha approaches Lord Rama or Putana comes to Baby Krishna, the actress appears as a graceful, beautiful damsel (*lalitā*), but when they show their real form as a demoness, the role is taken over by the Chakkiar. The author bemoans that not many Nangyars are coming forward to learn Kudiyattam.

The author has described three of the plays in detail; nearly half the book is devoted to the third play—the Nangyar Kuttu. He has given the Sanskrit verses, their meaning in English and also details of the various acts, gestures, etc. This will be of use and interest only to those who go to watch a Kudiyattam performance, and not to a general reader.

The book has some photographs which give the reader an idea of the costumes and make-up used in the plays. To an outsider these may appear similar to those used in Kathakali but there are vast differences between the two. One of the photographs is that of Ms. Heike Moser (a Westerner) as Lalita Putana. It would have been interesting if Rajagopalan had informed how and why foreigners got interested in this regional artform needing as it does a good command of Sanskrit.

A very good glossary and bibliography are provided at the end, and like all publications of the K.S. Research Institute, the get-up and print of the book are of a high standard.

Dr. Kamala S. Jaya Rao, *Hyderabad*

DEVĪ (GODDESSES OF INDIA): Edited by J.S. Hawley and D.M. Wulff. Published by Motilal Banarsidass, 41 U-A Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, New Delhi 110007. 1998. Pp. xiii+352. Rs.195.

It is said that the worship of Divinity as female existed in many ancient civilizations but is now virtually extinct. The dominant exception is India where it not only continues but has been developed to a state where goddess reigns as supreme as god. She is referred to reverentially as the Divine Mother, the source of all nature, and Nature herself. With the advent of feminism, many Westerners have started showing a great interest in this phenomenon. Consequently, there have been many analytical studies on Divinity as goddess. This is not to deny or diminish the interest shown by earlier Western scholars.

Devī (Goddesses of India), the book under review, is one more in the genre and is an anthology of well-researched essays. Interestingly, ten of the thirteen contributors are women. The book has two parts: Goddess as Supreme (that is, independent) and Goddess as Consort, and Goddesses who Mother and Possess (the latter term connotes what in Indian languages is referred to as 'god coming over a person'). This division is purely academic. All the contributors have been to India, met the scholars and the devout, and have tried to get into the complexities of the cults and culture that mark India's religious life. Each essay deals with a specific goddess. There are essays on Devi and Ganga who are pan-Indian; Sri and Bhagavati confined to southern India; and Vindhyavasini, Kali, Radha, Seranvali and Sati who are more popular in the North and East. Each essay deals with the concept (religious, mythological and philosophical), the methods of worship, and their psychological connotations to the devotee. To the uninitiated, the modes of worship may appear to range from the sublime to the outrageous.

The word devi, though used as a generic term for all female deities and even for humans, has yet a very specific connotation. Thus, whatever be the view of the Chaitanya school, referred to by Donna Wulff, Radha is not looked upon as goddess by many Indians. She is considered a symbol of unalloyed devotion or as an allegory for the *jīvātman*, ever pining to unite with the Paramatman. Equally misrepresenting is the 'Story of Godavari'—not to be confused with the river goddess, but of a nondescript woman who committed sati.

The piece that is totally out of place is the one on Bharat-Mata. It revolves round the *idee fixe* of a modern reactionary and fanatic Hindu group, and is a highly volatile, contemporaneous political issue. The coining of the term *matriot* for India's loyal citizens by the author is, however, very original. The term Bharat-Mata might have been first used by Bankim Chatterjee, as stated here by Lise McKean, but the political context then was entirely different. The idea was easily accepted and got fixed in the Hindu mind because earth itself has been worshipped as a mother goddess from ancient times. As Diana Eck says elsewhere in the book (p. 143), it is 'a Hindu view of the living land that is as old as India itself.' Mother India is never equated with devi forms such as Durga or Kali. There would be no objection to the inclusion of debatable issues such as Sati and Bharat-Mata if the title of the book was something else and more appropriate.

It is surprising that Saraswati, the goddess of speech and all types of knowledge, receives no attention in this book. Hers would have been indeed a very appropriate theme. She is not only a supremely independent goddess worshipped by both sexes but significantly, her consort—Brahma the Creator, is denied any form of worship!

'The Western Kali', the epilogue by Rachel McDermott, is a very balanced statement. She first delineates the reasons why Kali has become popular with Western thinkers and feminists. The Western feminists see Kali, *inter alia*, as a symbol of female sexuality; this interpretation has been lapped up by many Indian feminists too. This is unfortunate, for in Indian spirituality the Divine is always transcendent, beyond gender and sexuality. It is here that McDermott's discussion on 'Western interpretations of Indian materials' and on cross-cultural borrowings stands out as extremely relevant and timely.

Criticism notwithstanding, the book is eminently readable. To Hindus, who generally take for granted many things in their religious life, some of the interpretations will not only be interesting but extremely insightful.

Dr. Kamala S. Jaya Rao

SUNDARA KĀṆḌA: Translated by Swami Satyananda Saraswati. Published by Motilal Banarsidass, New Delhi 110015. 1998. Pp. iii+195. Rs.95.

The epic *Ramayana* continues to be very popular with Hindus all over the world. Many read the epic or have it read over a prescribed number of days, particularly during the period immediately preceding the Ram Navami. There are set rules for this ritualistic recital. Those who have no time or inclination to read the lengthy text recite only the fifth book, the *Sundara Kāṇḍa*.

Swami Tapasyananda, in the Introduction to his English translation of the Sundara Kandam,

mentions that this chapter is the core of the *Ramayana* and that it provides all the values to be sought by humankind. As the revered Swami says, whereas all the chapters of the epic are called by names which relate to the place or occasion to which the subject-matter refers, the *Sundara Kanda* ('Beautiful Chapter') does not follow this pattern. He mentions several reasons why it is called 'Beautiful'.

The *Sundara Kanda* is also considered to be an allegory where the *jivatman* (individual soul represented by Sita), living in the dark forest of *samsara* (transmigratory existence) and surrounded by evil forces (represented by Ravana and his tribe), deeply yearns for the Paramatman (the supreme Soul represented by Rama). The guru (represented by Hanuman) then helps the individual soul, Sita, in uniting with the supreme Soul, Rama. The recital of this chapter is therefore considered to confer on the devotee *moksa* or liberation.

Many poets have composed and recited the *Ramayana* in the various languages of India and have thus popularized it among the common fold who do not understand Sanskrit, the language in which the original version was written by the sage Valmiki. The *Ramcharitmanas* of Sri Tulsidas is extremely popular among the Hindi-speaking people. Written in Avadhi, a dialect of Hindi, the work is sublime poetry. Valmiki's *Sundara Kanda* ends with Hanuman's happy tidings of Sita's discovery in the Ashoka grove and his presentation to Rama of her hair ornament (*cudamani*). Tulsidas includes in his work the meeting of Vibhishana with Rama and the ocean acquiescing to give way to Rama and his troops to cross over to Lanka.

The book under review is a translation of the *Sundara Kanda* of *Ramcharitmanas* by Swami Satyananda Saraswati. True to the sannyasa tradition, the Swami has given absolutely no information about himself. The text is provided in Devanagari, and transliteration is given both in English and Bengali. At the bottom of the page the Swami's own translation is given.

A glossary of names of the characters with English translation (literal or metaphoric) is given at the end of the book. The Swami has chosen to use these translated terms rather than the original Sanskrit names in the translation of the text. This can, most of the time, confuse the reader. One expects that those who are interested in reading *Ramayana* would familiarize themselves with the characters. The Swami, for instance, uses the terms 'nature', 'daughter of one without a body', 'daughter of the cause' depending on whether the text refers to Sita by name, or as Vaidehi, or as Janaki.

The main character in the *Sundara Kanda* is Hanuman, who is also called Hanumanta. The Swami uses a strange and incorrect declension and refers to him as Hanumana.

There are some glaring mistakes in the translation, though these are not many. The word *'rāmākhyam'* (p. 7) means 'one with the name Rama'. The translator has confused the Sanskrit *ākhyā* with the Hindi *āṅkh* (eye). The term *udāsī* used while referring to Rama (p. 124) means one who is unconcerned or not affected by dualities, but it is translated as servant of circumstance, which Rama definitely is not.

The book, nevertheless, will be of help to those who do not know Hindi and Avadhi. The book also contains some paeans which the Swami refers to as 'fun chants'. The book is neatly printed and has an attractive cover, with a beautiful picture of Sri Rama.

Dr. Kamala S. Jaya Rao

AYURVEDA AND PANCHAKARMA (THE SCIENCE OF HEALING AND REJUVENATION): By Sunil V. Joshi. 1998. Pp. x+310. Rs.250; AYURVEDA AND LIFE IMPRESSIONS BODY-WORK: By Donald Vanhowten. 1998. Pp. xiii+282. Rs.250. Both books published by Motilal Banarsidass, New Delhi 110007.

Ayurveda is a holistic system of medicine according to which health is a state of dynamic integration of the body, mind and environment. Any disturbance in this leads to disease of the body-mind complex. Indian tradition, of which Ayurveda is a part, considers the physical body to be made of the five natural elements, namely, space, air, fire, water, and earth. These elements also group themselves in the body to form three non-material constitutions called *dosas*. The nearest the Western tradition comes to this concept is the three-humour concept of the ancient Greeks. There are three *dosas*, and in each person, one particular *dosa* is predominant. The effects of the *dosas* vary with season, food, life-style, and so on.

Ayurveda lays great stress on the type of food ingested, and its digestion. The digested food elements are carried to the various *dhātus* (loosely translated as tissues) in the body, by the *dosas*. Undigested food, called *mala*, is excreted through faeces, urine and sweat. Food not properly digested or *mala* not properly disposed of remains as *āma*, which is toxic in nature and causes disease. This may explain the seeming obsession of Indians with bowel movements.

Sunil Joshi gives a detailed, clear, and graphic account in his book of the principles of Ayurveda, and also of the *pancakarma* technique. The latter is

an important Ayurvedic procedure for the removal of toxins and for restoring the balance of the *doṣas* in the body. It literally means five procedures; these are emesis (*vamana*), cleaning the head and nasal region (*nasya*), purging (*virecana*), the technique of applying pressure (*basti*) and bloodletting (*rakta mokṣaṇa*). Joshi is a qualified Ayurvedic physician, who spends half his time in the US, practising and teaching this ancient system of medicine. This book, meant primarily for Westerners, was first published in 1997, and this is the first Asian edition. It will be equally useful to English-knowing Indians, most of whom have largely lost touch with the many great, ancient traditions of India.

The author of the second book under review, Donald Vanhowten, is a follower of Paramahansa Yogananda. He combines Ayurvedic principles with body-work (physical mechanics) to heal diseases, particularly aches and pains, as also to heal emotional problems. His contention is that repetitive actions bring about impressions in body membranes, the physical equivalant of *saṁskāras* or mental impressions. He uses the example of sitting or lying down on a patterned, hard surface and how it makes impressions on the skin. His treatment involves touching and using gentle pressure to remove these impressions and he calls this 'Life Impressions Body-Work'. The various procedures are described in detail and are illustrated with photographs. The language of the book is typically North American.

Dr. Kamala S. Jaya Rao

ASIAN MEDICAL SYSTEMS—A COMPARATIVE STUDY: Edited by Charles Leslie. Published by Motilal Banarsidass, New Delhi. 1998. Pp. xvii+419. Rs.295.

Asian Medical Systems traces the history, practice and present status of three great and ancient medical traditions, namely, Chinese medicine, Ayurveda and Yunani, although the last mentioned does not get much coverage. The book also compares the status of these systems vis-a-vis cosmopolitan medicine. The latter is what is known in India as Allopathy or 'English Medicine'. The book contains the proceedings of a symposium held in 1971, sponsored by the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research.

The contents are presented in six sections. The first one delineates the history of the three medical traditions, while the second one traces the development of cosmopolitan medicine in the West. The third section deals with the interesting issue of whether medical systems really develop as adaptive responses to patterns of illness. The next two sections discuss the culture of pluralistic medical systems. The sixth section deals with medical revivalism, an issue of great contemporary interest, particularly in India and China.

The contributors are mainly anthropologists and sociologists. The essays were found to be somewhat cumbersome and did not arouse the interest that they should have. One does not understand why this Indian edition came out so late after the symposium.

Dr. Kamala S. Jaya Rao

JOURNEY INTO CONSCIOUSNESS: By Charles Breaux. Published by Motilal Banarsidass, New Delhi 110007. 1998. Pp. xviii+254. Rs.175.

Journey Into Consciousness has of a half-title, 'The Chakras, Tantra and Jungian Psychology'. This book considers the seven *cakras* of Yoga one by one, and gives some meditation techniques so as to activate each one of them, mostly basing the ideas on Tibetan Buddhistic Tantra and psychology. The author claims that he has had several experiences, both in his Introduction and towards the later part of the book.

Swami Vivekananda says: 'Certain positions, certain modes of breathing, help to harmonise and concentrate the mind, but with these must go purity and strong desire for God, or realization. (*Complete Works*, Vol. 5, p. 294.) Whatever we may do, the basic thing needed is purity of mind. Without that, no spiritual pursuit will be of any use.

This book may be of interest to those who are specialized in Tantras of the Tibetan type. There are pictures of Tantric gods and goddesses in the book, a glossary of Tantric terms, a bibliography, and an index.

Sumit

The desire to be desireless will take its firm root in us in proportion to the intensity of feeling with which we realize that in us the Self alone is real and all else evanescent. True religious life commences only after this.

—*Swami Ramakrishnananda*

GANDHI PEACE PRIZE 1998 FOR THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

In what could be called a reflection of the regard the whole nation bears towards the Ramakrishna Mission, the Government of India honoured the Mission by conferring on it the prestigious Gandhi Peace Prize for 1998, on 13 February 1999, in recognition of its contribution towards promotion of peace, tolerance, non-violence, social harmony and justice, and selfless work for the emancipation of the less privileged sections of society.

Mahatma Gandhi is universally recognized as a towering apostle of peace, non-violence, freedom and tolerance. His approach to truth and non-violence has been in the 20th century an important instrument of conflict-resolution, peacemaking and release of creativity at local, national and international levels. Both as a theory and as a practice the Gandhian method has attracted attention and following among some of the most creative leaders, intellectuals and opinion-makers in the world. To suitably acknowledge the contribution that the Gandhian approach is making at the global level to peace and harmony, the Government of India, in 1995, launched an international Gandhi Prace Prize for social, economic and political transformation through non-violence and other Gandhian methods. Instituted on the occasion of the 125th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, as an annual award, **it is one of the highest awards given by the Government of India in any field,** and is open to all persons regardless of race, creed or language.

The selection is made by a high-level five-member jury consisting of the Prime Minister of India, the leader of the Opposition in the Indian Parliament, the Chief Justice of India and two other eminent persons. This time Mission was picked the winner from among 53 nominations by Sri Atal Behari Vajpayee, Sri Sharad Pawar, Sri M.M. Punchhi, Sri R. Venkataraman, former President of India, and Dr. Ariyaratne, a leading Sri Lankan social scientist. The previous recipients of the prize are Mr. Julius Nyerere, former President of Tanzania, Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne, and Mr. Gerhard Fischer, a former German diplomat. This is the first time an Indian organization has been chosen for the coveted award.

Announcing the award, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, Minister for Human Resources Development, said, 'This prize honours the commitment and contribution of the Ramakrishna Mission towards amelioration of human suffering and undertaking activities which are close to the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi.'

The award carries a cash prize of Rs. 1 crore, a citation and a plaque. Dr. R.V. Vaidyanatha Ayyar, Secretary to the Department of Culture, said, 'Only recent work achieved within 10 years immediately preceding the nomination is considered for the award; an older work may, however, be considered if its significance has not become apparent until recently.'

The prize was handed over to Srimat Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, by Dr. K.R. Narayanan, President of India, at an official function held in the Throne Room of Raj Bhavan, Calcutta. Reproduced below is the full text of the citation:

Srimat Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj, receiving the Gandhi Peace Prize 1998 from Dr. K.R.Narayanan and Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi

'The defence of truth and non-violence, eradication of disease and suffering and rehabilitation of the unfortunate and the deprived are some of the perennial challenges confronting mankind. Mahatma Gandhi was among those towering figures of our times who addressed themselves to such seminal issues.

'Gandhiji was a product of our history and heritage. It is said: "No other country than India and no other religion than Hinduism could have produced a Gandhi." Gandhiji was also a social activist and a *karmayogi*. For him *deśa* and *dharma* were two eyes and his life was the message to his people.

'The Gandhi Peace Prize instituted by the Government of India honours truly those dedicated to thought and action that reflect the Gandhian worldview. It is for the first time that this prize is being awarded to an institution, the Ramakrishna Mission. The Mission, established by Swami Vivekananda in May 1897, mirrors the message of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa whose life, in the words of Mahatma Gandhi, was a story of religion in practice.

'Sri Ramakrishna and his great disciple Swami Vivekananda were symbols of the true Indian character. They embodied spiritual strength, scientific mind, all-embracing compassion and universal brotherhood. It was Swami Vivekananda who transformed Sri Ramakrishna's message of the unity of all religions into a spiritual activism. Swami Vivekananda's exposition of ancient Vedantic wisdom to modern scientific minds bridged the gulf between spiritual knowledge and scientific understanding. According to Swami Vivekananda religion is also science, and echoes of Vedanta are seen in many findings of modern science.

'In this age of science and technology, the aesthetic and spiritual life have to be simultaneously developed. Man is not mere clay on the whirling potter's wheel. He is the master of his social environment as well as an inheritor of a great past. He has an inquisitive mind, an intuitive heart, a sensitive spirit and a searching conscience. For him the tree of life is as important as a grid of steel. Realizing the importance of this ideal, the Ramakrishna Mission has published several books on our cultural heritage. Shedding light on our glorious past, the Mission has made us see the shrine of beauty we have been born in.

'There is a world of difference between those who say *"asti brahmeti cedveda parokṣaṁ jñānameva tat"* and those who say *"ahaṁ brahmeti cedveda aparokṣaṁ tattu kathyate."* Instead of saying "God exists", if individuals can be helped to see God who dwells in themselves, the human spirit blossoms in the spark of divine light. Men will not be reduced to a mass of bones but will become harbingers of truth. Direct communion with the Divine, fathoming the depth of the Divine and developing an attitude of compassion constitute the essence of religion. Vivekananda was a prophet of spirit who wanted to enable direct communion with the Divine. For him *nara sevā* was *nārāyaṇa sevā* both in the social and spiritual sense.

'Understandably the Ramakrishna Mission, started by Swami Vivekananda, has always focussed on action and service. The several fields of service in which the Mission has distinguished itself in the country and abroad include relief and rehabilitation to victims of natural disasters, service to children and youth through its educational institutions, tending to the immediate needs of tribals through establishment of welfare centres, alleviation of suffering through medical service, and promotion of communal harmony and goodwill by preaching and practising harmony of religions. By its own initiative and through its sister institutions Sri Sarada Math and the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, it has also contributed substantially to the advancement of women. Ramakrishna Mission now has 137 branches and manages a wide variety of institutions such as hospitals, schools, colleges, dispensaries, orphanages, hostels, and rural and tribal development centres.

'The Ramakrishna Mission has become a great source of peace and happiness amongst the people in this country and abroad since it lays a great store by selfless service as the means of God-realization. The service offered by the Ramakrishna Mission is open to all irrespective of caste, creed or language. In a country like India where different religious sects and communities live, the idea of tolerance and brotherliness towards each other is of great relevance. The same ideal was cherished by Gandhiji throughout his life.

'The Ramakrishna Mission exemplifies the Gandhian spirit of selfless and active social action. In bestowing the Gandhi Peace Prize for 1998 on the Ramakrishna Mission, the Government of India honours an organization which has rendered service to humanity over the past century with a sense of commitment that reflects Gandhian thought and practice.'

The event brings to mind Mahatma Gandhiji's visit to Belur Math on 6 February 1921. It was Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary. In response to the earnest request of the people, Gandhiji stood on the upper verandah of the monastery overlooking the Ganges, and addressed the crowd on the lawn below. He said in Hindi: 'Please do not think for a moment that I have come here with the idea of preaching my doctrine of "non-cooperation and spinning wheel". I have come here to pay my homage and respect to the revered memory of

Swami Vivekananda, whose birthday is being celebrated today. I have gone through his works thoroughly, and after having gone through them the love that I had for my country grew a thousandfold. I ask you young men not to go away empty-handed without imbibing something of the spirit of the place where Swami Vivekananda lived and died.'

The above incident points out in bold letters the regard Mahatma Gandhi bore towards the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, and towards Swami Vivekananda in particular. The prize that was given to the Ramakrishna Mission on 13 February 1999 may be viewed as the tribute which the Father of the Nation might have personally presented to the Mission had he been alive today.

Ramakrishna Mission Primary Relief

Andhra Pradesh

Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Visakhapatnam, conducted primary relief work at Pudimadka village near Yellamanchali in Visakhapatnam district where 175 houses were gutted by a fire accident in February. About 360 saris, 350 dhotis, 700 sets of children's garments, 700 bedsheets, 700 towels, and 175 sets of aluminium and stainless steel utensils consisting of 11 items per set were distributed among the fire-affected families.

West Bengal

About 1305 lungis, 2640 bedsheets, 1900 towels and 13,247 aluminium and stainless steel utensils were distributed through Ramakrishna Math, Baghbazar, among 1180 fire-affected families of Narkeldanga in North Calcutta. Subsequently, another fire broke out near the same area where 97 poor families were affected. Besides distribution of milk to the distressed children, 133 lungis, 200 bedsheets, 500 towels and 100 sets of aluminium and stainless steel utensils consisting of 11 items per set were distributed among the needy.

Tripura

Ramakrishna Mission, Agartala, conducted extensive primary relief work among the people rendered homeless by the recent communal disturbances in Kanchanmala, Gabardi and other areas close to our Viveknagar complex. 1003 dhotis, 1115 saris, 300 *pachras*, 74 blankets, 243 garments, 10,000 used clothes, 675 packets of baby food and 5575 aluminium utensils were distributed among 2036 families sheltered at 9 camps within a radius of 28 km from Agartala. The distribution centres were visited by many eminent persons including ministers of the state and central governments.

Ramakrishna Mission Rehabilitation Work

Gujarat Cyclone Rehabilitation

Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot, has almost completed the construction of all the 120 houses along with other infrastructural facilities at Nandana and Vadatra villages of Kalyanpur Taluka in Jamnagar district. The villages were inaugurated on 12th and 19th March respectively.

Andhra Pradesh Cyclone Rehabilitation

Construction of the Vivekananda Bridge is progressing steadily at Pallavaripalem village of Mummidivaram Mandal in East Godavari district, with the casting of a pre-stressed concrete girder on 18th February. The remaining 7 girders will be cast by stages.

Maharashtra Earthquake Rehabilitation

The integrated rural development work being done in collaboration with Loka Siksha Parishad, Narendrapur, and Excel Industries, Mumbai, is continuing at the three villages in Latur district. Main service activities that were being carried on when reports last came in were as follows: (a) 302 farmers adopted crop management technology regarding proper spacing of plants, balanced fertilizers, plant protection, etc; (b) 114 village women took to nutritional gardening; (c) celrich compost heap and vermi composting were undertaken; (d) 59 toilet blocks were repaired; (e) 160 patients were treated through first-aid health centres.

The Government of Maharashtra has declared Kawali as the model village of Ausa Taluka for the year 1998 in crop productivity and Panchayat participation.

That which makes us forget our own self or our own life is true love and beyond duty. Or rather it is the fulfilment of the highest duty and must therefore bring freedom.

—*Swami Abhedananda*